THE

MODERN CHURCHMAN

By identifying the new learning with heresy, you make orthodoxy synonymous with ignorance.—*Erasmus.*

A State without the means of change is without the means of its conservation.—*Edmund Burke.*

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SIGNS OF THE TIMES

Religion in Transition: Four Significant Volumes.[1]

The plain man recognizes the significance of facts even if he recognizes the significance of nothing else. Perhaps in human history, or at least in human civilization, books have been the most significant of all facts. In the year which has just ended four books have been published which seem highly significant to us as students of modern religion, particularly the Christian religion. These are, *Belief and Action* by Viscount Samuel, *Religion in Transition*, edited by Vergilius Ferm, *No Casual Creed* by J. C. Hardwck, and *Aspects of Belief* by J. S. Bezzant.

If these books could be widely read, their teaching understood, and their spirit assimilated by the teachers and educated adherents of the world's religions (especially by the adherents of the Christian religion) we might develop the reasonable hope that mankind, or at least that portion of mankind which possesses influence for the shaping of the future, could secure,

[1] *Belief and Action.* By Viscount Samuel. (Cassell and Co.; 7*s.* 6*d.* 1937.)

Religion in Transition. By S. Radhakrishnan, C. F. Andrews, George A. Coe, Alfred Loisy, James H. Leuba, Edwin D. Starbuck; edited by Vergilius Ferm. (Allen and Unwin; 7*s.* 6*d.* 1937.)

No Casual Creed. By J. C. Hardwick. (Macmillan and Co. 5*s.* 1937.)

Aspects of Belief. By J. S. Bezzant. (Nisbet; 7*s.* 6*d.* 1937.)

within the next few decades, a large measure of moral and spiritual unity in place of the existing welter of superstitions and taboos, primitive myths and unhistorical traditions, which constitute the practising religion of the vast majority of mankind to-day. Undoubtedly modern thought and modern science have done much during the last eighty years to destroy the falsehoods incorporated in all the Faiths. What scientific criticism has not yet done is to present in a clear, unified and convincing fashion the truth which is possessed by all the great religions of mankind in varying degrees, and the supreme value of this truth for human welfare whether individual or social, national or international.

These four books to which we desire to draw attention seem to us to make a useful contribution to this emerging vision of a world religion in which truth, and not tradition, is the only and supreme authority.

Viscount Samuel on Belief and Action.

We place first in our list Viscount Samuel's contribution, because it seems to constitute the best introduction to the problem of religion and the modern world. His volume has a quality of massiveness and comprehensiveness and reasoned argument which will both attract and convince the modern-minded reader. He will feel, as he reads *Belief and Action*, that he is in the company of an enlightened and really liberated personality, freed from traditional theologisms and outworn philosophies, tribal prejudices and vulgar errors : those four classes of idols which, Francis Bacon was convinced, thwarted the human personality in its search for truth and precluded its success. And yet it is not the liberated quality of Viscount Samuel's mind which constitutes his greatest attractiveness. Many minds, as liberated as his own, have treated the modern religious and moral situation with insight and lucidity. Of each of them it may be said, as of Goethe, in Matthew Arnold's 'Memorial Verses' :

> 'He took the suffering human race,
> He read each wound, each weakness clear
> And struck his finger on the place
> And said thou ailest here, and here.'

And there the matter ended. The strength of Viscount Samuel's book is that it does not conclude simply with an acute diagnosis

of the present situation—the breakdown of the traditional religious Faiths and the reason for the inroads of agnosticism, naturalism and materialism — nor even with the stage beyond characterized by the flight from reason, the retreat into mysticism, the attempts to re-establish traditionalism, not on a spiritual, but on a utilitarian foundation. Viscount Samuel is not satisfied with destructive criticism and sardonic analysis. He possesses a gift of sympathy combined with insight and he sees all that he deals with as a process promising positive achievements. It is this power of understanding and optimistic interpretation united to a constructive vision of what might be, nay, in the end, must be, which is so valuable a feature of his book.

It is not possible nor indeed desirable here to summarize the contents and conclusions of so weighty a volume. Viscount Samuel has a cross-bench mind and realizes the need of the higher synthesis as the only way of doing justice to the elements of truth contained in conflicting positions. This delivers his argument from the weakness and confusion which results from hedging. For instance, in discussing the claims of intuition and reason to supremacy in the sphere of religion he is unable to say which is supreme: he acknowledges that both have their place in religion, as they have in science, but points out that reason has this advantage over intuition that while liable, like intuition, to make mistakes, it possesses, what intuition does not possess, the means for rectifying its mistakes.

> 'There is, however, this difference between the mistakes of reason and those of intuition. The former can be detected and remedied by the processes of reason itself: indeed, if rational methods are consistently applied, sooner or later they must be detected and remedied. Intuition does not provide for its own revision. Left to itself, its mistakes persist indefinitely.' (p.73).

In the much-debated question of miracle, Viscount Samuel, like all modern thinkers, is clear that miracle can supply no satisfactory proof of moral and spiritual truth. Moral and spiritual truth is in no way dependent upon miracle for its proof. Miracle is no proof either of the existence or of the activity of God. To say that everything is miraculous, and that miracles are everywhere, is to confuse the issue by giving to the term miracle a sense which it did not originally possess—for miracle is the exception and not the rule and so was cited by primitive apolo-

gists to prove a special intervention of the Divine in human affairs. Miracles belong to an outworn way of thinking both in reference to God and to the Universe and are as offensive to philosophy as they are to science.

> 'We seek to know whether there are special marks of the hand of God which validate the truth of particular revelations. To say that the hand of God is in everything evades the question.
>
> 'So we find, viewing the matter as a whole, that "the miraculous" does not help us. Indeed it is a hindrance. In the modern world, the clinging to miracles—which for the purpose of this discussion must be defined as events outside the order of nature—is, without question, one of the chief causes of the weakened hold of religion. It alienates people of scientific mind. Where there is religious doubt, it tries to settle it by methods that cause greater doubt. By offering physical tests for spiritual things, it lowers religion to a materialistic plane. "The craving for signs and wonders," says Dean Inge,—"that broad road which attracts so many converts and wins so rapid a success—leads religion at last to its own destruction, as Christ seems to have warned His own disciples."'

Viscount Samuel's attitude towards the future of religion is optimistic. He regards religion as essential for human welfare and progress and as unable as the rational, moral and aesthetic faculties, to be extirpated from human nature. Moreover, the history of human religion, although very strange, even grotesque and horrible, is marked by an amazing power of vitality and progress. Nevertheless he has no illusions about the dark and difficult side of the existing religious situation. To-day there are many things which make it far more easy for human beings to become the victims of agnosticism than to become the adherents of a rational moral and spiritual religion. An immense amount of educational, religious work demanding no ordinary degree of wisdom, courage, and self-sacrificing service has to be accomplished if the religious situation is to be saved for this and the next generation. The Conservatives are convinced that the remedy is to withdraw into their traditional fortresses and to refuse to yield an inch. The Marxists are convinced that they need do nothing since the fortresses of the traditionalists are undermined and must inevitably collapse on the heads of their defenders. Neither policy provides a remedy. Human nature needs a spiritual home—not a prison nor a death trap—and neither traditionalist nor Marxist is providing that. The following phrases from Viscount Samuel's volume indicates how he

views the present situation :

> 'All religious organizations amend their creeds and formularies, perhaps by imperceptible stages: they select, and they retain or quietly discard: so that the orthodoxy of one period is found not to be the same as that of another. And it is true that at the present time change is proceeding, in some degree, almost everywhere.
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> 'In many of the faiths there are definite movements for reform. (p. 87).
>
> 'These movements have their significance, but it would be an error to attach to them, as yet, a great measure of importance. Taken at their highest, they touch but a small fraction of the hundreds of millions who belong to those faiths. The numbers whom they influence are trivial compared with the multitudes in all lands who are silently drifting into scepticism or indifference.
>
> 'Clearly, therefore, it is wrong to say that the development of religion, which is so plainly desirable, is impossible: and wrong also to say that it is already being effectively pursued.
>
> 'That it involves risks is undeniable. Whether institutions so ancient can be re-fashioned without falling apart in the process must be a matter of doubt and a cause for anxiety. Yet if that risk is not taken, the other risk remains to be faced—that a moving world will leave behind the immobile creeds.' (p. 88).
>
> 'If creeds are too weak to face inquiry and discussions, are they strong enough to control conduct?' (p. 91).

Six Creative and Prophetic Lives.

Our second volume, *Religion in Transition*, serves to illustrate from intimate personal experience a number of the conclusions reached by Viscount Samuel. It consists of six autobiographies, of absorbing interest, by men of great distinction among our religious contemporaries who in this age of religious transition have been compelled, in response to its spirit, to undertake the arduous and painful pilgrimage from religious traditionalism to religious modernism. The readers of these autobiographies will agree with their editor's statement in the opening words of his Preface.

> 'In an age so convulsed as ours it is fitting that there be recorded some first-hand experience of its storm and stress by those who are living creatively and prophetically.'

S. Radhakrishnan.

The first to give an account of his pilgrimage is Sir S. Radhakrishnan. He began life as a traditionalist Hindu but came under the influence of Christian educational institutions in South India, but these did not alienate him from loyalty to

the essential religious convictions of Hinduism. In his degree-courses he became acquainted with Western philosophic thought. This undoubtedly did much to liberate him from Hindu religious traditionalism but did not alienate him from Hindu philosophic speculation for which he conceived a growing regard. In him we see the fusion of Hindu philosophy with Christian ethics. He writes :

> 'Religion must express itself in reasonable thought, fruitful action, and right social institutions.' (p. 20).

From the Christian religion of the West he has learnt the lesson that enlightened religious philosophy must be united to a practical policy of social reform. Yet he has not become so Westernized as to be eager to sacrifice moral and spiritual values to a system of mechanized economic materialism.

> 'But if it is to be achieved by the other exploitation of the baser passions of human nature, its selfishness and hatred, its insolence and fanaticism, the ideal order will be an inhuman one. Let us by all means establish a just economic order, but let us also note that the economic man is not the whole man.' (p. 29).

C. F. ANDREWS.

If in S. Radhakrishnan we have an example of the religious modernization of an Oriental brought about by contact with Western ideals we have in the case of C. F. Andrews an example of the religious modernization of an Englishman stimulated by contact with the mystical philosophies of India.

C. F. Andrews began his religious life as a deeply spiritual dissenter, but his student life in the University of Cambridge affected him in two ways. It led him to exchange the limitations of dissent for the larger religious life of the Church of England. The scientific spirit which permeated the University taught him to value Truth above Tradition. This led in due season to those familiar difficulties which arise from the compulsory affirmation of traditional dogmas expressed in ancient creeds and liturgies. He threw himself with devoted zeal into missionary work in India. This new experience did not solve his intellectual difficulties but led him to adopt the policy of 'suspended judgment.' He had come to the conclusion that doubts and questionings about such things as the Virgin Birth and bodily resurrection of Christ did not vitally affect his spiritual life.

Further contact with religious life in India led to a new vision of Christ and to the termination of Andrews' mediating ministry in the English Church. In close association with Rabindrinath Tagore, Mahatma Gandhi and others he now knew Christ to be an eternal Spirit incarnated, not only in the personalities of professing Christians, but also in the lives and characters of saintly Hindus. For him the Communion of Saints became the true Church of Christ. As for the congeries of denominations and sects which believe that they constitute the Christian Church, they are its travesty. The triumphant words of St. Paul:

> 'Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor un-circumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all and in all. (Col. *iii*, 11).

came to express for Mr. Andrews a vastly enlarged and spiritual conception of the Christian religion as independent of all denominational organizations and as not demanding membership in any as a condition of the Christian experience. As the result of their transitions Radkrishnan, moving from East to West, and Andrews, moving from West to East, find themselves standing side by side; yet Radkrishnan is essentially a Hindu and Andrews is essentially a Christian but the 'Middle Wall of partition' between them is broken down. Although Kipling wrote:

> 'For East is East, and West is West
> And never the twain shall meet
> Till East and West meet suddenly
> At God's great judgment seat.'

yet Radkrishnan and Andrews have met, not 'suddenly,' at the crack of doom, but gradually, as the result of yielding to the pressure of those new forms of truth which the Spirit of the Age, united to the Spirit of the Ages, offers to-day to all mankind.

GEORGE E. COE.

'By what route have I arrived at the convictions that I now hold with respect to the major issues of human life? In particular, why have I "changed cars" several times since my journey started?' are the questions which Professor George A. Coe seeks to answer in his religious autobiography.

> 'Reared in the family of a Methodist minister, I early became familiar with conventional formulas for Christian belief and with con-

> ventional practices of piety. I took the validity of the whole for granted, just as I accepted the Constitution of the United States. (p. 92).

As he developed intellectually and ethically he found himself to be surrounded by youths 'religiously devoted yet in religious darkness' (p. 93). This prompted him to study the psychology of religion. Training in Natural Science under an inspiring teacher led him to apply the scientific method to the study of his own religion. Of course the inevitable result followed and he was compelled to abandon a number of the traditional Christian dogmas. Yet, due no doubt in some measure to his studies in Biblical Criticism and in Comparative Religion, he did not exchange wholesale acceptance for wholesale rejection. Each doctrine had to stand or fall on its own merits. His next stage was to realize that theological orthodoxy is not the only orthodoxy. He found himself surrounded by orthodoxies: political, social, economic, ethical and educational; and that all of them had one characteristic in common that they all were opposed to 'the creativity that is potential in man.' He further discovered

> 'that an authority that is expelled through the door can come back through the window, and that all minds have windows as well as doors.' (p. 98).

In his resolution to see life steadily and see it whole he encountered a vast number of inconsistencies in his contemporaries—radical critics of the Scriptures were not radical critics of the existing economic system and so on. As he advanced, he declined, for reasons which are not clear to us, to accept the method of a liberal Christianity which strives to be religiously orthodox but theologically free. Yet his valuation of the significance of the teaching of Christ is very high. He writes:

> 'I saw that the teachings of Jesus with respect to love, service, the value of persons, and saving-and-losing life, tend at one and the same point to individualize and to socialize. There is not an individual Gospel plus a social Gospel, but a single Gospel that actually illustrates the nature of personality as social psychology conceives it.' (p. 112).
>
> 'It is an interesting fact that Jesus represented self, neighbour, and God as bound together in experience by one and the same valuational act.' (p. 108).

Nevertheless as he reflected on the needs of modern education he realized, as every modern student of the Gospel must, that

> 'we have not merely to apply Jesus' teachings, but also to develop germs that were only implicit in them recognizing problems and developing purposes that were not in his mind at all.' (p. 113).

In Professor Coe's pilgrimage, specifically theological problems lost much of their interest for him as he came to realize that many of them were incapable of speculative solution.

On the other hand he did not yield to the temptation, if such a temptation could exist for one of his temperament, to retreat into the sphere of religious mystical experience. His method of solving life's problems was essentially the method of Jesus: 'This do and thou shalt live.' For instance, as an educationalist Professor Coe is convinced that

> 'The theory of Christian education had to be a social theory, and the practice of Christian education had to be a present exercise of ethical love.' (p. 113).

His view of religion seems to us to go further than Matthew Arnold's definition of the Christian religion; that it was three-fourths morality. Professor Coe finds religion, not as possessed of independent existence, but as a quality of action. He writes:

> 'Religion is not something added to the functions that make a man a man, but something already within these functions when they are intensely pursued. To be religious is as natural as it is to be in dead earnest about anything. There are, consequently, as many kinds and levels of religion as there are kinds and levels of society.' (p. 106).

Professor Coe does for religion what Aristotle seems to do for the soul—identify it with a function.

The Professor's pilgrimage has led him far from his Methodist home but although perhaps there is no Christian Church to-day which could retain his allegiance, yet, that he is a son of the Kingdom, none can doubt.

ALFRED LOISY.

Alfred Loisy in a striking history of his spiritual pilgrimage entitled 'From Credence to Faith' sums up the whence and the whither of his transition. Sprung from a family of French Roman Catholic farmers he

> 'received, in his early years, a religious education quite immune from the influence of that rationalism which has, ever since the eighteenth century, been continually at war with Catholicism as established in France. Of that rationalism, often sectarian in character, . . . he has never been a disciple. He has nevertheless reached, through the various experiences of his existence, a religious faith which attributes, indeed, to Christianity a place of eminence amongst the religions of the world, but which also recognizes in all ancient religions, even the most primitive, some part in the education of mankind: for to the mind of this author all these religions seem destined finally to be fused in a higher

religion, adapted to the needs of a spiritually unified humanity.' (p. 126).

Loisy was by nature a student and possessed an acute and critical mind and as his studies advanced from stage to stage, particularly in the spheres of Biblical criticism, he became plunged in doubts and difficulties from which his powers of casuistry and his whole-hearted devotion to the Roman Catholic Church were unitedly unable to deliver him.

Loisy owed much to two great scholars at whose feet he sat; Renan who taught him the art of Biblical Criticism and Duchesne who

> ' was already possessed by the idea, to which he adhered until his death, of the utter impossibility of any scientific evolution of Biblical learning in the Roman Church. . . .'

Suspected and suppressed by the Roman authorities Loisy was finally excommunicated on March 7th, 1908. Within twelve months the ex-pupil of Renan was appointed by the French Government to the Chair of the History of Religions in the Collège de France. Here he enjoyed, not only the greatest freedom of research, but also the prestige and publicity of a *savant*. The essence of religion and its manifold forms constituted the centre round which his investigations moved. His conclusions may be summed up in the last paragraphs of his autobiography.

> 'Thus the Christian ideal might be regarded as the essence of Christianity, imperfectly realized in historical Christianity: and it might be also the essence of the religion of humanity, indefinitely realizable in the future.
>
> 'Just as ancient Christianity, by adapting itself to the conditions of the Mediterranean world, conquered it, by introducing a principle of human life superior to all the pagan religions and to Greek wisdom, so let those who uphold the same ideal, though stripped of its traditional entanglements, and enlarged to meet contemporary needs and aspirations, raise their minds to the height of all true knowledge. Let them open their eyes to the light that comes from every side: and their hearts to the travail and labour of mankind: that they may infuse into that labour the divine principle of love and devotion: and may a religion be realized on earth that shall be the crown of Christianity and all other religions, and that shall perfect all men and lead them into the life of the spirit and of communion with God.' (p. 171).

Although Loisy's pilgrimage has led him far beyond the limits of traditional Catholicism, who can say that it has not led him also into a right understanding of the essence of the Christian Faith?

J. H. Leuba.

The two remaining pilgrimages recorded are those of Professors J. H. Leuba and E. D. Starbuck, notable students of the Psychology of Religion. Leuba, a Swiss by birth, a graduate in science of Neuchâtel, emigrated in his early manhood to America. There he became engrossed in the Psychology of Religion and published in 1896, before the better known treatises of Starbuck and William James, a psychological investigation of religious conversion. His studies in the psychology of religion included important researches into the fields of Comparative Religion and the History of Religion. His pilgrimage which began by leading him away from traditional Christianity would seem to have concluded by leading him to regard religion, religious ideals and religious practices as possessing value only for the past. In his view scientific psychology to-day can not only do for humanity all that religion did or tried to do in the past, but much more.

> 'My philosophy is simple, it does not penetrate far into the metaphysical realm. Stupidity and cruelty, as well as intelligence and goodness, seem manifested in the universe. How to reconcile these opposites, I do not know. The systems of philosophy with which I am acquainted leave me quite unconvinced.
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> 'There is, however, one fact of enormous significance, a fact incontestable and verifiable by everyone: an urge works in man—it is present already in the animal world—to create the perfect in every aspect of life. For the perfect in art, science, and conduct, some men will sacrifice their lives: and all will admire the sacrifice. How does that fact bear upon the problem of God and Immortality? To that query I can give only halting and incomplete answers. But I know that, apart from all reasoning, there is satisfaction in beauty, truth, and affection. A life of devotion to the ideal is good, now and in itself. The high delight procured by such a life does not depend upon the existence of a God or the eternity of man: it is good in itself. That is sufficient to give dignity and worth to life.' (p. 199).
>
> '. . . if the comforting dream has to be given up we have acquired in exchange more efficacious means for realizing, in part at least, the end described by the Christian religion as the "Kingdom of God upon earth."' (p. 200).

E. D. Starbuck.

Professor E. D. Starbuck, a member of an English stock long settled in America, began his religious life in a Quaker family in the Middle West. Religion and Morality in his home and in the surrounding community were so interwoven with daily life as to seem entirely natural. Not till he became a

student seeking a degree in the University of Indiana did the religous difficulties created by Darwin's *Origin of Species* trouble him, but he was by heredity and early education 'on the side of the Angels.' Religion was so real to him that scientific facts and rationalistic controversies seemed superficial in relation to it. Morbidity, scepticism, revolt, apostacy were impossible in the case of a nature so healthily religious, so happily moral, so aboundingly optimistic. He believed in truth and the search for truth but the truth for him was all light and no shadow. His studies were of the most varied kinds; linguistic, mathematical, biological, philosophic; but they all yielded as time went on to an absorbing interest in religion and its psychology. He thus describes the series of forms which the obsession assumed.

> 'My "mission"—it has always felt like a sort of "calling"—has been to try to render thinkable and usable the illusive reals of religion. This obsession has shifted along the years through many phases: zeal for understanding, teaching, and expounding the Old and New Testament —a zeal that found an outlet as a teacher of Sunday School: missionary enthusiasms: the application of scientific concepts to the wonder tales and miracles: historical and sociological orientation: philosophical revaluation: psychological analysis and synthesis based upon an immediate study of the facts of personal experience. Regardless of the particular outlet for expression, the obsession is always present and gains momentum through the years.' (p. 203).

His attitude towards religion was essentially positive and constructive. He knew its reality in the very depths of his nature: his problems were how to put it to the best use and he seems never to have strayed from his objective. In this respect he differs from Dr. Coe and Professor Leuba. The former seems to have abandoned belief in the absoluteness of religion and the latter in its usefulness—and with consequences which are not without significance.

It is also not without interest that as Starbuck views the problems of our modern civilization: personal, economic, social, political; his remedy is not found in revolution but in reconstruction. He writes in a memorable sentence:

> 'There was no revolution but a terribly profound reconstruction.'

Every fool when he wakes up to the evils of a situation demands revolution because he has neither the insight nor the patience nor the power of self-sacrificing service needful to

secure reconstruction. It is of importance to note how much religion there was in Starbuck's make-up and how little theology. He notes that

> 'Along with the mystical immediacy of the religious experience and its "mighty inwardness," there has run through the years a philosophy or theology to match. It might be described as a sort of pantheism—a sense of an Interfusing Presence.' (p. 204, f.).

Yet on the other hand he writes:

> 'There probably never has been a more persistent and stubborn doubter. The negations have never been altogether, not even predominantly, destructive, for they have been held in check by insatiable hungers reaching in every direction, including the wish sufficiently to rationalize religion as to make much of it thinkable, understandable, and controllable.' (p. 205).

What is so conspicuous in Starbuck, as in the most profound religious mystics, is his practical power. There is a problem 'something needs knowing' but there is also another, no less important, 'something needs doing' and how is it to be done? Of the work to be done by the religious psychologist he writes:

> 'In the very near future we shall take quite seriously a case of selfishness or spitefulness or discourtesy in a child as we do now a case of mumps or measles, and we shall correct it.' (p 255).

—a situation foreseen by the author of *Erewhon*.

He concludes with the prophetic vision:

> 'We have been, of necessity, creatures at the mercy of the blind forces of nature and of human nature. If we can now create better fruits in the orchard, make more perfect mechanisms for conquering the distances, and build more perfect houses, we can also envisage the sort of humanity that is most desirable and move far towards its realization.' (p. 256).

The Practical Conclusion.

Of our six transitionists, five began their religious life as Christian traditionalists—their Christianity ranging from Quakerism to Romanism. All of them have been compelled to forsake Christian traditionalism or rather to transcend it. In these men so sensitive, so intelligent, so sincere, so courageous, we have an anticipation of what must happen to humanity, and yet there is no 'must' about it—it might happen, but how easily it might not. How few human beings are capable of achieving what these men have achieved. The great bulk of humanity can only make its transition with their assistance and the assistance of those like them. And if this assistance be not forthcoming

what must the result be? We are now in a situation where it is much easier for the vast bulk of mankind not to remain religiously traditionalist—to do so is increasingly difficult whether within Christianity, Islam, Judaism, Hinduism—but to become materialists and secularists. Should humanity do so, human civilization must deteriorate or collapse. If this view be correct then the practical conclusion is clear: the religious teachers of mankind must go forward if humanity is to enter the Promised Land.

J. C. Hardwick.

No Casual Creed, by J. C. Hardwick, represents the attempt of a modern-minded clergyman who has been twenty-five years in Holy Orders and is a well-known writer on religious topics, to present his religious convictions to every-day men and women in the clearest language possible. In sixteen brief chapters he treats various problems presented by the religious interpretation of the Universe in so suggestive a manner as to provoke thought even where he does not secure agreement. Indeed he has no desire to secure agreement in the formulation of religious beliefs. He maintains that the right order is not for agreement in doctrine to come first, as is insisted on by the Church authorities, but last. The true order he holds to be first, the goal: second, the community for attaining it: third, the experience enjoyed in that community: fourth and last, the explanation of the experience in terms of some doctrine. Undoubtedly he is right. It is the order of Jesus Himself: 'Come, follow Me: Ask and ye shall have: Seek and ye shall find: Knock and it shall be opened unto you.'

This conclusion in this time of dogmatic distress is one to be most seriously considered by the Church authorities, and not simply considered, but acted on. The time has come when the Church ought to cease making any dogmatic demands from those who would enter her Communion. Christian Faith ought not to be identified with assent to a series of doctrinal propositions. Christian Faith is the spirit which prompts a man to undertake the Christian adventure, and a man shows that he is willing to undertake the Christian adventure by his seeking to enter the Christian fellowship—Divine and human.

Dare we hope that the members of the Archbishops' Commission on Doctrine will themselves have the courage and insight to make this recommendation and so relieve many of the most morally sensitive and intelligently spiritual of our fellow-countrymen from that which is not a help but a hindrance in the Christian life? These creedal tests and demands may not have been without value in past ages and in different conditions: to-day it is decisively otherwise. The ecclesiastical policy of tightening up the dogmatic standards which both the fanatical and the timid are united in demanding is suicidal—that is so far as the Church is concerned. It is a policy which provides many of the best and most intelligent with perhaps their strongest reason against entering her membership. If the modern state, whether Fascist or Communist, is bent on reducing personal freedom, might we not hope that the Christian Church in our land would have the Christian courage to stand to-day for freedom in her policy and practice. It must not be supposed that Mr. Hardwick is a pragmatist and wishes the Church to become pragmatist in her teaching. He writes:

> 'A belief is an adjustment of the mind towards reality, and is of use for one thing only—to face reality and to cope with it. This point of view has nothing in common with the view known as "pragmatism," which is a stultification of clear thinking, and only one symptom of the despairing reaction against reason which characterizes a decaying culture. 'Pragmatism" says that a belief is true if it "works," and that this is the sole criterion of its truth. As a matter of fact a true belief does work, for the simple reason that it adjusts the mind to reality, so that the action which follows will be based upon a true and not an illusory view of reality. But a belief is not true *because* it works: it works because it is true.' (p. 19, f.).

Although not anti-intellectualist in religion, Mr. Hardwick is strongly opposed to the stressing of a false intellectualism. He writes that the Church 'provides the young with a religion which is open, far too open, to intellectual criticism.' (p. 9).

The transition from a traditional religion based on a mediaeval dogmatism to the new faith whose supreme test is a living experience should, Mr. Hardwick thinks, be easy if

> 'Western civilization were the happy possessor of a forward-looking and not a backward-looking religion. But so long as the Christian churches are predominantly concerned to preserve ancient beliefs and customs, little can be expected from them in the way of guidance.
>
> 'But what a religion with vitality would give us would be not so much economic guidance as intellectual and moral guidance, as well as

technical guidance in the spiritual sphere. It would assist us to learn what to believe, what to aim at, and how to control our own nature and develop its best possibilities. But how can a church do this which is afraid to put its own intellectual house in order? It may be said that our troubles are not intellectual but moral. But a failure to face intellectual problems *is a moral failure*—it is to rest content with 'the lie in the soul.' The moral weakness of organized Christianity springs from this one source: it is failure of nerve, an inability to face realities.' (p. 6).

'We can have no notion, so anaemic is the condition of our religion, of the possibilities of a religious culture freed from those inhibitions which restrain its vitality at present. What religion needs at the moment is release—a chance to experiment and inquire: in a word to get rid of every kind of mortmain. . . . (p. 7).

'And the surest sign of death in a religion would be that it had lost the power to produce new beliefs to push out old ones—just as the surest sign that a tree was dead would be failure to produce a crop of new leaves in the Spring.' (p. 8).

Mr. Hardwick's is certainly 'no casual creed' nor can it be transmitted ready-made to others, for it is itself in the making. What he has done is to indicate how each must secure his creed for himself; and that the Christian Church ought to teach this method and not insist on imparting ready-made creeds which are in many respects out of date. Still less ought she to insist on modern men accepting these creeds as a condition of full membership in her Communion.

J. S. Bezzant.

The fourth volume to which we wish to direct attention is *Aspects of Belief* by Canon J. S. Bezzant. It is an able and lucid presentation of the case for Christian Theism, not so brilliant and original as Mr. Hardwick's presentation but more guarded and closely knit. The two volumes cover very much the same ground and Canon Bezzant's volume provides a useful supplement and adjusts the balance in some cases by swinging to the right where Mr. Hardwick swings to the left. Both together present a drastic criticism of contemporary ecclesiasticism. We should be sorry however if this commendation of Canon Bezzant's volume should lead our readers to conclude that since in Canon Bezzant's volume they may hope to find the last word or correct answer from the Christian point of view to our present religious doubts and difficulties that therefore there is no need to read the three preceding volumes to which we have

called attention. That would be the procedure of a schoolboy who enters in his note-book the correct answer to some mathematical or geometrical problem but does not think it needful to note the method by which the solution has been obtained. Christian apologists in a hurry are only too ready to follow the schoolboy's example and this invariably deprives their apologetic of any convincing power. For the man who has lived among the doubts and difficulties is quick to recognize that the apologist who is proffering his easily obtained solution has never really faced the doubts and difficulties in question and so is making pronouncements in a magisterial manner about something of which he knows very little from real experience. The realization of the modern situation, with a vital appreciation of all that has brought it into existence, is to-day as important for the apologist who would argue for the Christian hypothesis as is its correct solution. Those who are to be delivered from the spiritual paralysis of their materialism, secularism or agnosticism require from their would-be physician an understanding and sympathetic diagnosis of their disease as a first stage in the healing process. Canon Bezzant himself possesses the experience needed for such a diagnosis. The basic argument of this volume is derived with due acknowledgements from the massive apologetics contained in Dr. Tennant's *Philosophical Theology*.

Canon Bezzant is especially valuable in his lecture entitled 'Sin, Forgiveness and Grace.' In dealing with the ecclesiastical doctrine of the Fall he cites with approval Dr. Wheeler Robinson's conclusion that Adam's transgression is removed from the *data* of the problem.

He criticizes with convincing lucidity Professor N. P. Williams' theory of a 'pre-human, transcendental, or pre-cosmic Fall.' Of it he writes :

> 'In its historic form, . . . the Fall-doctrine did not arise from the interpretation of historical facts. Arising as an inference from the experience of sinfulness, it subsequently found a historical basis in the Genesis story accepted as actual events. Driven from the world of fact, this extraordinary theory of a pre-mundane Fall would find a basis for the old doctrine in the realm of fancy. We are asked to believe that God's original creation was vitiated by sin before ever the evolutionary process began. The only creation of which we have any knowledge whatever is the world characterized by an evolutionary process: and nothing known suggests that that process, conscious sin and its consequences apart, might or ought to have been other than it is.

> The pre-mundane Fall-theory would have us regard the whole process of evolution as the difficult and gradual recovery from an earlier corruption, for which there is not a tittle of evidence. . . . The theory is put forward as the best that can be done towards a solution of the mystery of evil, but it does nothing to remove or even reduce that main difficulty for ethical Theism.' (p. 44, f.).
>
> 'Such a baseless speculation as that of a pre-mundane "Fall" can have no place in the constructive doctrine of man which would ground itself upon what can reasonably be called knowledge.' (p. 46).

Canon Bezzant is not able to hold with Roman Catholic theologians that the existence of God is logically demonstrable. He writes:

> 'Reasoning may conduct to a point at which the venture of faith can reasonably be made: it can show that the necessary faith does not differ essentially from the faith involved in science and in other human undertakings but is continuous with it. When the venture of faith has been made, reasoning can do a good deal to defend and justify the results, but it cannot eliminate the need for the venture. . . . Faith, as Dr. Inge has often said, begins in an experiment and ends in an experience.' (p. 71).

Very truly does Canon Bezzant remark that

> 'The traditional lines of approach to the questions about the being and nature of God seem rather remote from the modern outlook, while the authoritarians reply to or silence the questions without answering them. . . .
>
> 'The growth and great success of scientific method, and the adoption of the theory of Evolution, have involved an approach to the facts of life and of thought different from that which dominated the thought of the past, a method which is experimental and empirical.' (p. 73).
>
> 'The issues of the discipline and the struggle involved can be expressed in some words of Dr. Inge, in a question to which experience returns no uncertain answer: Do we know of any who have sought the knowledge of God as diligently as other men seek wealth and honour, who have come away empty-handed?' (p. 110).

Canon Bezzant seems to us to exercise a fruitful combination of wisdom and courage in treating the Divine revelation given in and by Jesus Christ. With Dr. Edwyn Bevan he holds that 'the inner Reality of the Universe has looked into human eyes through the eyes of Jesus Christ.' This he regards as no accidental fact but as a significant event in a divinely-directed creative process. He maintains that no convincing claims can be made for this supreme divine revelation in Jesus Christ unless it be based upon a body of sound historical evidence for His life and teaching. He writes:

> 'If revelation consists in the interaction between the Divinely guided event and human minds similarly guided to apprehend its signi-

ficance, we cannot affirm a supreme revelation in Jesus Christ if we know extremely little about him as a historical personage. Thus in my view the Liberal Protestants and Modernists who claimed a large and secure knowledge of Jesus and regarded him as the supreme teacher of ethical Theism, while holding loosely or abandoning some statements in traditional Christological formularies, were nearer to historic Christian theology than are those who combine an affirmation of belief in traditional Christology with radical historical scepticism in regard to the Gospels.

'The combination of creedal orthodoxy with such scepticism seems to me an impossible undertaking.' (p. 132).

As regards the Christian Church which sprang out of the life of Jesus Christ, Canon Bezzant recognizes that that Church 'is not inerrant either in faith or in morals.' He writes:

'The authority of the past cannot be invoked to settle problems which increased knowledge is always liable to present. Even universal agreement existing in the past upon matters which were not then identical with the problems they have since become, or which were then seen in a very different setting, can as well betoken universal error as universal truth.' (p. 192).

He appositely cites Professor A. E. Taylor's epigram:

'If one age, from the worthiest motives, persists in defending the indefensible, the next is likely to see a panic surrender of the indispensable.'

and concludes with this judicious piece of advice:

'Wise authority will try to avoid creating or intensifying tension between itself and the consciences of good and able men: and in the modern world authority will gain in impressiveness only as it becomes more truly spiritual, that is, the more unreservedly it commits its authoritative message to the test of knowledge and experience.'

'The larger the number of questions regarded as completely closed by authority, the more disastrous is the cramping of the mental life of Christians which is a vital activity of full spiritual life and essential to its growth.' (p. 199).

'The desire and willingness to serve God and to follow Christ, and ability to serve intelligently, are more important as the conditions of membership in the Church and for office in the Ministry than acceptance of ancient creedal summaries. Employed as tests or as safeguards of the truths embodied in them creeds often fail of their effect: for this use of them prevents multitudes from coming in sight of those saving truths. Such use of them may exclude the sensitive, the intelligent and the honest: it can never keep out the ignorant, the unintelligent and the dishonest, from whom the Church has always most to fear.' (p. 200).

A Growing Faith and an Enlarging Church.

As we study the religious transitions of those whose moral and spiritual messages we have so very inadequately presented,

we cannot fail to recognize that each of them is striving to promote the Kingdom of God on earth and is himself a subject of that Kingdom. Would it not be to the great advantage of mankind if these men, besides being united in an invisible moral and spiritual communion, were united also in a visible Church? Yet, at present, there is no Church on earth sufficiently enlightened and comprehensive to embrace them all. In the interests of mankind ought not all men of enlightenment and good will to work for the creation of such a Church — not at this stage by calling into existence a new religious organization, but by enlightening the mind and enlarging the sympathy of that particular religious society to which each belongs? As this is progressively achieved the Universal Church of the future will emerge. It is in the soul that things happen. No universal Church is possible which has not been preceded, and prepared for, by the Communion of Saints.

SÖREN KIERKEGAARD*

By the Rev. H. T. L. Lees, M.A., B.Sc.

KIERKEGAARD at last in printed English! Kierkegaard the Dane, the inspirer of such varied forms of individualism as those of Nietsche and of Barth; Kierkegaard, who stood up against the might of Hegelianism; Kierkegaard, known in repute but not in substance, misunderstood and misquoted, often unconsciously and at second hand, wherever the borderland of philosophy and religion is being discussed, or wherever men of goodwill are striving with 'a world disinclined to allow reality to Christian experience.' How abominable is our English habit of reading books about the great and not reading their works! How many know all about Francis Bacon, Isaac Newton, Mark the Evangelist, and Paul the 'traveller and Roman citizen,' without ever studying their writings! And yet there is

**Philosophical Fragments*. By Sören Kierkegaard. Translated by David F. Swenson. New York: American Foundation. Oxford: University Press. London: Milford. (7*s*. 6*d*.) 1936.

Sören Kierkegaard. By Theodor Haecker. Translated and with a Biographical Note, by Alexander Dru. Oxford: University Press. London: Milford. (2*s*. 6*d*.) 1937.

some excuse in the case of this Kierkegaard, whose works, hitherto unknown to us directly, are yet having so great an influence on us to-day. Thirty years ago the *Harmsworth Encyclopedeia* could say 'another remarkable master of dialectical irony is the great Danish thinker Sören Kierkegaard,' and it is perhaps because of this quality of his and not of any supposed difficulty in translating Danish into English (for was not Hans Andersen in every Victorian home?) that only when, as a reviewer of the latest work on Pascal remarks, we have now the passing of religious individualism into secular individualism, thence into secular totalitarianism, the aforesaid 'abominable habit' has a chance of forswearing itself, and English thinkers, theological and secular, academic and popular, have the opportunity of receiving in literal translation the thoughts of Kierkegaard, through the pertinacity, be it noted however, not of English students and English lovers of that blue-spired land of Denmark, but of the Scandinavian cultural centre of the Middle-West United States.

Kierkegaard was born in the year after the retreat from Moscow, and died in the year after Balaclava,—symbolic of his life, from a retreat to a daring venture; he was however fighting all the time the dread and melancholy inherited from his father, Michael Pedersen Kierkegaard, who, somewhat like Borrow's hero, spent his life repenting a youthful cursing of God on the low hill-pastures of Jutland.

Sören Aaby Kierkegaard was born in a draper's house in the city of Copenhagen, and at its university he studied theology, as well as philosophy and aesthetics. He sparred in print with Hans Andersen, and won his master's degree by a dissertation on Irony, especially that of Socrates. A stormy youth closed in 1841 with a broken engagement—broken for reasons which may be summarized under the wide head of incompatibility. In his great period there sprang, entirely from his own pen, a series of brilliant works—nominally by various authors. Simultaneously there began to appear under his own name his religious discourses, which became, where he was made the butt of the comic paper *Corsair*, an exposition of the gospel of suffering.

The epilogue is rather sad. In 1854 his childhood's hero, Bishop Mynster of Zealand, died. The smouldering doubts of

the Christliness of his official life were fanned into flame by the panegyric preached by his eventual successor Martensen, and Kierkegaard began against organized religion a violent, bitter, and witty campaign, chiefly by issuing nine successive numbers of a pamphlet called *The Moment*. The reason for this title may appear to us later; let it suffice to say now that the struggle killed him.

> 'In regarding the relation of the stable to the changing in Kierkegaard we must realize that both are exemplified in his pseudonymous writings.'

The 'Climacus' who wrote the *Fragments* and the 'Anti-Climacus' who is credited with *Sickness unto Death*, are examples of his fair-mindedness in putting forward different aspects, as well as of his progress along the path 'Aesthetics—Ethics—Faith.' In the work commonly regarded as his most difficult, but so admirably translated into French by M. Tisseau under the title *Crainte et Tremblement*, he argues from Abraham on the Mountain of Moriah that there may even be a religious suspension of Ethics, and yet undoubtedly he is also seeking to justify his breaking off his engagement to Regine Olsen.

Kierkegaard's teaching is best exemplified in the *Philosophical Fragments*. Their aim is to 'realize the reflective task of translating Christianity whole and entire into terms of reflection'; to show that the Christian position is philosophically satisfying; to suggest the connection between the Incarnation at a point of time and its effect on eternity for God and man.

Socrates, according to Plato, taught that learning was merely a kind of remembering, the *condition* for which was Recollection of what had been known in a previous existence. The teacher was merely *maieutic* (*i.e.* a midwife), an *occasion* of recalling to memory Truth already known, and the *moment* of recalling vanishes in the eternal consciousness of man. Hence, to go beyond Socrates, the moment of understanding (fresh) Truth must be a *Moment* having decisive significance, and not be a mere occasion. The Antecedent State of the believer, which is the lack of the Condition for his already understanding the Truth, is due to his being in Error because of his own guilt, *i.e.* in Sin. God, who created him not merely brutish, must have endowed

him with the Condition, the loss of which must be due to himself. Like a child given money (the Condition) to buy either a toy or a book, he bought the toy (Sin), and found that by being bought it lost its value and could not be later exchanged for the book (Truth). He had spent the Condition. To receive back the Condition he must be recreated, a thing possible only to God. In the *Moment*, therefore, he becomes conscious of both birth and new-birth, and the Moment makes its appearance when an eternal resolve comes into relation with an incommensurable occasion, *i.e.* God's purpose is realized in time through Jesus Christ.

The 'paradoxical passion' of the Reason is aroused and seeks a collision, bent upon its own downfall; just as self-love, in the form of love of another, loses itself, for does not even religion assume man loves himself when it commands him to love his neighbour as himself, and commands self-love thus to be transformed? Thus man's Reason, too, reacts on itself when colliding with an unknown something. To call this something God and thus claim to have proved his existence would be a tautology (and approximate to the Hegelian enlightened pantheism which Kierkegaard so much disliked).

> 'The difficulty is to introduce God's ideal essence into the sphere of factual existence.'

The Unknown or God is unlike, but Reason cannot conceive the Unlike, hence the need for revelation. God's unlikeness is derived not from what man derives from God but from what he has brought on his own head, *i.e.* from Sin. God gives the consciousness of Sin and the Absolute Paradox of his making Himself like the individual man, revealing the absolute unlikeness of Sin, and proposing to do away with this absolute unlikeness in absolute likeness. The Reason says the Paradox is absurd, but is reconciled by a new 'passion'—Faith. But

> 'the servant-figure was no *incognito*. And when in the strength of his omnipotent resolve, which is like his love, God makes himself the equal of the humblest, let no innkeeper or professor of philosophy imagine that he is a shrewd enough fellow to detect anything, unless God gives the condition.'

What is philosophically necessary cannot *come into* being, and therefore the historical Incarnation must be, not necessary but a free act of God, and is therefore the object of Faith.

Probability-proofs are valueless. New birth with Faith is to the Reason as absurd a notion as that of being born twenty-four years old. But

> 'is not Venice built over the sea, even if it became so solidly built up that a generation finally came upon the scene that did not notice it; and would it not be a sad misunderstanding if this last generation made the mistake of permitting the piles to rot and the city to sink?'

Dr. Bain puts the other side very well in his study of Kierkegaard (S.C.M. Press, 4*s*. 6*d*., 1935).

> 'The root error,' he says, 'of these theories (*viz*. the transcendentalism of Kierkegaard, Barth and others) is to be found in the statement that there is an infinite, qualitative difference between eternity and time, and between God and man. . . . Words that have a meaning regarding us can (then) have no meaning when applied to God. To speak of God as true, righteous, loving, is nonsense.'

But Kierkegaard, while he saw God revealed in Christ, fled from anthropomorphism: 'deepest down in the heart of piety lurks the mad caprice which knows that it has itself produced its God.' 'But,' says Dr. Bain,

> 'while this line of argument (*i.e*. appealing from man's higher nature to what we may expect from God) has sometimes been abused by attributing to God man's worst passions, as . . . has too often been done even by Christians, it remains the only line along which we can come to any real, valid conception of the character of God. To abandon it is to plunge into blank scepticism. The same result flows from the depreciation of reason in religion, which plays so large a part in the teaching of Kierkegaard. To use reason to prove the untrustworthiness of reason is to commit intellectual suicide.'

Yet here, on Kierkegaard's behalf, it might be urged that to use reason to prove the trustworthiness of reason is no better! But Dr. Bain would reply that 'to believe a thing that is absurd and because it is absurd is an absurdity to which God does not invite us.' Is this indeed a *reductio ad absurdum*?

For Kierkegaard each generation, each individual, must receive the Condition from God. If it can be received from a contemporary disciple of Christ or a successor—then the giver is *eo ipso* the object of faith and *is* God—a state surely well illustrated by the worship of infallibility, whether of people or of books, or even, greatest danger of all, of each man's *Lares et Penates* particularly of childhood or of age. For each generation to hand on

'these words: "We have believed that in such and such a year God appeared among us in the humble figure of a servant, that he lived and taught in our community, and finally died," it would be more than enough.'

Kierkegaard is alive to inconsistencies in the Gospels, although he says they are superfluous details. 'The echo of centuries . . . has tended to surround faith with noisy chatter.' This is surprisingly modern. His Christology, orthodox though it is in the best sense, is of the marrow-bone orthodoxy without frills around the dish. Christianity proposes to base the eternal happiness of the individual on his relationship to something historical, but—faith is always militant. Readers of *The Modern Churchman* will be grateful that Kierkegaard described, in the language of everyday philosophy, a theory of sin and redemption, of error and faith, of Socrates and Christ, which is satisfying to such an acute intellect and such a sincere and suffering soul as his own.

To Kierkegaard 'Subjectivity is Truth,' a phrase which is now too hackneyed to express all it means, but his attitude to corporate religion, before his quarrel with Bishop Martensen, was not inimical. It was rather the Archimedean *Nolite perturbare circulos meos*, or like Rabelais' excuse for the 'dingle dangle wagging of his Diogenetical tub,' namely, that he was unfitted to bear his part in the Community, lest he might merely increase the prevailing confusion. Instead of devising a System he wishes, we read, 'to go from the person over the things to the person and not from the things over the person to the things.' Absolutely every man is equally near to God, because he is loved by Him—is it true, asks Professor Haecker, that there is Kierkegaard's message and mission? Or in the threefold scheme 'Aesthetic—Ethic—Religious?' He is looked upon by some as leading them to Christianity and by others as leading them away from it.

We have given some idea of the gist of Professor Swenson's admirable translation of the *Philosophical Fragments*. It was right that this important key-work should be selected first for treatment and the promised series will be welcomed. Their value would be increased if they contained an index.

The second book under review is an appreciative criticism

of Kierkegaard by a German Roman Catholic, one moreover not in the line of von Hügel. The extraordinarily varied application of the religious depth of Kierkegaard is emphasised by the suggestion that if he had been a German, the whole German *ethos* would have been different. Theologian, philosopher, psychologist, critic or poet, or all five—the writer is as uncertain how to classify him as we are. He feels sure of his soundness in dogma, believing however that Kierkegaard portrayed a mythical Abraham and even a mythical Jesus Christ, 'not the historical Jesus Christ of the seed of David who was foretold and came amid signs and wonders testifying to his office.' Indeed to Kierkegaard he was, as we have shown, the Man of Sorrows, the Suffering Servant, a picture which is at least as true. The importance of the religious discourses is stressed; and yet—dialectics, we read, we seek to escape by perception, by Newman's *illative* sense, and by revealed religion. But all lead us back to dialectics, in which Kierkegaard is a master. 'Had Luther been more of a dialectician in the Pauline sense, he could never have taken over only half the apostle's dialectic!'

Kierkegaard was indeed a prophet and prophets have ever been impatient of sacerdotalism, even of sacrament. 'I believe,' writes a Danish *sognepræst* (vicar), 'that S.K. had no sacramental foundation. We in our church are from Grundtvig sacramentalists, and I am glad to have it so in this world of "βροχὴ και ποταμοὶ,"' and although the Danish Church is as varied as our own, most of its members as well as most of our readers would probably agree. And yet Professor Haecker is right in saying that

> 'the characteristic of the age in which he (Kierkegaard) lived, its hopelessly tangled Hegelian method which sweeps away and desecrates all quality, all purity from the divine, simply shouted for his type as a corrective.'

God send this age, too, more prophets!

THE CHURCHES AND THE PROBLEM OF THE STATE *

By the Rev. Alan Richardson, M.A.,
(Author of *The Creeds in the Making*, etc.)

THERE is no question confronting the Christian Church to-day more urgent than that of its relation with the State. English Churchmen are prone to take an insular view of the matter, and when the question of the relation of Church and State is raised, they will probably begin a discussion about the disestablishment of the Church of England. In this article we wish to call attention to a question wider and more serious than our particular local issue, for it involves our entire understanding of the Christian attitude towards 'the secularisation of modern society and the growing power of the State, which present problems to the intelligence of Christians and lay burdens upon their consciences' (*The Churches Survey Their Task*, p. 77). English Churchmen must learn to consider the question, not from the standpoint of their own particular Church and nation, but from an oecumenical standpoint; their understanding of the relation of Church and State in the modern world must be based upon a knowledge of the condition of affairs in countries other than their own, if they are to act wisely in a situation which is rapidly becoming critical for the very existence of Christianity in the world. A book which gives a good description of existing relations between churches and states in Europe at the present time is Dr. Adolf Keller's *Church and State in the European Continent* (Epworth Press, 1936); to this we may add Dr. W. Adams Brown's *Church and State in Contemporary America* (Scribner's, 1936). A Roman Catholic consideration of the issue is to be found in Christopher Dawson's *Religion and the Modern State* (Sheed and Ward, 1935). The Report of the Oecumenical Conference held in Oxford last July (pub-

* *Christian Faith and the Modern State*. By Nils Ehrenström. (S.C.M. Press. 1937. pp. 240. 6/- net.)

The Churches Survey Their Task, the Report of the Oxford Conference on Church, Community and State, 1937. (Edited by J. H. Oldham, Allen and Unwin. 5/- net.)

lished by Messrs. Allen and Unwin under the title, *The Churches Survey Their Task*) presents the findings of a group of Christian leaders drawn from many different countries and churches, who after several years of preparation met together and discussed the relation of Church and State and national community; the result is a statement of the main principles and issues involved which ought to be studied carefully by all who would understand the crisis which confronts the Christian Church throughout the world to-day.

There is a paragraph in this Report which should be pondered over by those who have tended to think of the relationship between Church and State only in terms of the Anglican situation at home, *i.e.* in terms of establishment and disestablishment:

> 'In thinking of the Church, more particularly in relation to the State, we tend under the influence of earlier habits of thought to think in the first instance of the contrast between a State Church and a free Church. We think, that is to say, of the organic and legal connection between Church and State and of the degree of State supervision of the Churches. This was natural so long as the State acknowledged the fact of the Church and of the Christian Faith to which it is witness, but when the State, as a result of secularization, began to adopt a neutral attitude to Christianity and to the Churches, or rejected the Christian Faith altogether, or attempted to subordinate the Church to its own aims and world-view, questions that concerned the legal status of the Church became of secondary importance. Here we are concerned primarily with the freedom of the Church which is necessary for its own existence, quite apart from the question whether the Church is organically connected with the State or is a free organization legally recognized or tolerated by the State' (p. 265, f.).

The Report draws attention to the actual condition of affairs in the modern world:

> 'One of the outstanding facts in the present world-situation is the increasing significance of the State in the total life of mankind. This shows itself not only in a great expansion of the area of its competence, but in a far-reaching glorification, and even religious exaltation, of the State, its symbols and its representatives' (p. 241).

Two fundamental aspects of the modern situation are stressed in the Report: (1) The extensive social disintegration of modern life and the totalitarian attempts at reintegration. Those who suppose that this is a question for German and Italian, rather than British, Christians are reminded that

> 'it is of the utmost importance to bear in mind that the totalitarian State is only the political expression of a tendency which can just as well take other forms and have other points of crystallization. Even in countries

where the ruling ideas are those of liberalism and democracy, economic and political forces are at work which must lead to a rigid control of economic life, of public opinion, of national habits, and in general to a greater unification of the national being' (p. 247).

(2) The Dechristianization of Society—in which the saddest feature is the growing secularization of the churches themselves in the midst of a secular civilization. Another feature of the situation is emphasized:

'A little noticed subordination of the Church to the State is found in the fact that the Church is seldom favoured for its own sake, but only in so far as it is regarded as useful for the welfare of the State, or as part of the historical inheritance of the nation. Thus modern states are severing themselves from Christian influence' (p. 249).

It is obviously a duty incumbent upon Christians who are alive to the critical position of their religion in the secular world of to-day that they should at once begin to re-think the whole problem of the relation of Church and State in the light of the new and rapidly developing situation. It is also surely obvious that no merely insular solution will appear satisfactory for long; the problem is a world-problem confronting the churches, and an oecumenical answer is therefore required. We must begin to think out our answer in the light of the experiences and attitudes of all the main lines of tradition within Christendom. In this attempt we shall be greatly aided by a recent book which sets forth an oecumenical consideration of the problem, *viz.*, Mr. Nils Ehrenström's *Christian Faith and the Modern State* (S.C.M. Press, 1937). This book forms part of the preliminary literature produced by those who were engaged before last July in preparing the ground for the Oxford Conference. Mr. Ehrenström was a collaborator from Sweden in the Research Department of the Universal Christian Council in Geneva, who possessed both the ability and the opportunity to make a thorough study of this subject. He became the secretary of the section of the Conference which dealt specifically with the subject of Church and State, under the distinguished chairmanship of Professor Max Huber of Zurich. His book, which is outstanding alike in its grasp of the issues involved, its appreciation of the important contributions of each of the main lines of Christian thought upon this problem, and its lucidity of expression (it is admirably translated), should be read by all who are concerned about the effectiveness of Christianity in the modern world.

Besides certain chapters dealing with the concrete world-situation and the general Christian approach, Mr. Ehrenström devotes a chapter to each of the great Christian traditions in the true oecumenical spirit, *viz.*, the Roman Catholic, the Eastern Orthodox, the Anglican, the Lutheran and the Calvinist views. There is a valuable chapter on the 'Doctrine of the Orders' which plays such an important part in modern Continental Protestant thinking, and which is so little understood in this country. About each of these traditions Mr. Ehrenström writes with understanding and sympathy, endeavouring to bring out the contribution which each has to make to a Christian view of Church and State which shall be genuinely oecumenical, rather than merely national or confessional.

The author finds considerable difficulty in putting his finger upon any view which might be styled distinctively 'Anglican' upon the subject of the nature of the State. (He is not, of course, concerned with the narrower domestic issue of disestablishment, but rather with the broader question of the Anglican understanding of the nature and authority of the State.) Thus he writes :

> 'There is no consistent body of thought which can be called specifically Anglican; this is partly due to the fact that the interest of Anglicanism is mainly directed to other questions than those of explicit statements of doctrine. It is one of the characteristic features of Anglicanism that its conception of the State, and of the attitude to be adopted towards it, has never been systematically formulated. As a rule, the attitude of the Anglican Church has been decided practically—by the Church as a whole and by its individual members—in relation to historical events and circumstances, without much reflection upon the inner connection between basic affirmations and practical conduct' (p. 79).

It must be remembered that Mr. Ehrenström is not writing a historical survey of Anglican thought upon the nature of the State, but is rather trying to discover what are the main features of Anglican thought upon the issue to-day. He does not discuss Article XXXVII, and there is no reference to the work of men like Hooker. Some English readers may be disappointed by the fact that he is not acquainted with Hooker in the same intimate way that he is familiar, for example, with Luther and Calvin. But, as Dr. Oldham points out in the Preface, although he is not acquainted with English and American literature as fully as he is with Continental writers,

'just because the volume is written from the Continental standpoint, and in the light of what is being thought and written on the Continent of Europe, it has an exceptional interest for Anglo-Saxon readers' p. 5).

Instead of attempting to discover any specifically Anglican theory, he undertakes an examination of two representative writers upon the subject of the State, *viz.*, the Archbishop of York and the Rev. V. A. Demant. Many an English reader has sighed over the obscurities of Mr. Demant, yet our author is able to distil a meaning out of his writings! The Archbishop is by no means an unworthy representative of Anglican thought upon the subject of the State; indeed, his Grace is one of the few Anglican thinkers who in recent years have recognised the importance of this subject and given it serious consideration. The Archbishop is probably typical of Anglican thought in that he takes a comfortable view of the benevolence of the State, which must concern itself with the fulness of life of the community and the well-being of every individual within it. Mr. Ehrenström writes:

> 'The end of the State (according to these Anglican thinkers) consists first of all in protecting and encouraging the ordered interplay and the due development of the individuals and groups within the community. The end of political activity is "the temporal well-being and happiness" (the quotation is from Demant) of the community' (p. 94).

We greatly respect Dr. Temple's finely realistic thought upon the subject of the State—what could be more sound realistic common-sense than the following characteristic utterances?—

> 'The State is a necessary organ of the national community, maintaining through Law, as promulgated by a government endowed to this end with coercive power, the universal external conditions of social order' (*Christianity and the State*, p. 113).
>
> 'It is desirable that Law should be just; it is essential that it should be stable' (p. 122).
>
> 'Force is entrusted to the State in order that the State may effectively prevent the lawless use of force' (*Christ and the Way to Peace*, p. 15).

Yet we cannot help feeling that there is something too benign about Archbishop Temple's benevolent view of the State, especially if we have recently read some left-wing writings. (Read, for instance, Professor Laski's *Theory and Practice of the State*, written from a near-Marxist point of view, or Professor Reinhold Niebuhr's *Interpretation of Christian Ethics* (S.C.M. Press, 1936), inspired by some of the deeper insights

of the classical Christian tradition.) Does the comfortable Anglican point of view make room for jarring realities like the class-struggle, or the manipulation of the State by the ruling class as an instrument by which it maintains its position of privilege, if necessary by force? Even the Oxford Report, we regret to say, contents itself with a mere glance at such disturbing suggestions, only to pass them by with a shrug :

> 'It is urged against it (*i.e.* the view that the State is the indispensable and beneficial means of human co-ordination) that the State essentially means a domination of one over others even when externally its constitution presents a different appearance. Whether this is true or not in particular historical situations, it is a fact that the State as the impartial bearer of power always tends, at least to a certain extent, to promote the interests of the whole' (*The Churches Survey Their Task*, p. 255).

This is the kind of simple faith which usually goes with Norman blood; it is perhaps noteworthy that the less privileged orders of society obstinately persist in rejecting it. Our theories of the State must be wide enough to take account of the 'demonic' element in the structure of every State : St. Paul wrote Romans xiii. before the Neronian persecution had revealed this demonic element in the State, but the author of the Book of the Revelation has had his eyes opened to the horrible facts : there is a sense in which every Rome merits the title of Babylon. It is the failure to understand the significance of the demonic element in the nature of the State which is the weakness of Anglican thought upon the subject. As Mr. Ehrenström says, the Anglican writers

> 'agree with the great traditional Catholic doctrine of the State in rejecting every conception which seeks to derive the State from the existence of evil, or to describe it as being essentially sinful' (p. 88)

They tend to agree with the Roman conception which regards the State as an expression of the divine Law which underlies the universe as a whole; the State is the temporal means whereby man may be supported as he pursues in the Church his supernatural destiny.

The Calvinist view, on the other hand, regards the existence of the State as in some sense bound up with the existence of evil. In the words of Mr. Ehrenström, according to this view

> 'the distinctive quality of the State is the power of coercion. Hence it must be recognized that it is not only the dominion of evil which makes the State an indispensable condition of human society, but that evil

belongs to the very Nature of the State itself. " The compulsive character of the State—and this means what we call the State—is not an expression of the will of the Creator " ' (p. 185; the quotation is from Brunner).

Thus, the Calvinist view tolerates no glorification or deification of the State; let us notice two more quotations from Brunner as cited by Mr. Ehrenström (p. 187):

'The State is of this world, it is indeed even the most concentrated form of this world; it is a hundred per cent. secular.'

'A Christian State is a sheer impossibility; a Christian State is as impossible as a Christian police force, a Christian prison or a Christian system of penal legislation.'

But the Calvinist point of view is frankly paradoxical (or should we say 'dialectical'?), for it also recognizes that the State is necessary in human life, and as such is one of the 'Divine Orders':

'It also affirms the State as a Divine Order, as an instrument of the unfathomable love of God which transcends all human reason, and also uses methods which seem quite remote from His Spirit in order to achieve its ends. Without the protecting wall of the power of coercion, humanity would be exposed to the danger of disintegration. The husk of the State protects the growth of all the finer flowers of cultural, moral and religious life. . . . It protects men from the socially disruptive effects of their own selfishness and thus provides the indispensable framework for a truly human and Christian life' (Ehrenström, p. 188).

We cannot in a short space do justice to all the insights of Reformed Continental theology upon this theme; but we believe that within the Calvinist tradition there is a valuable corrective of the undue Anglican emphasis upon the benevolence of the State. We hope that many English churchmen will read Dr. Emil Brunner's *The Divine Imperative* (Lutterworth Press, 1937), especially the section dealing with the State; this book seems to us to be one of the most important contributions to Christian ethics which have appeared since the War.

Passing on to another great Christian tradition, we find that, according to the general Lutheran view,

'the State is based upon the social nature of man; it is the product of the will to community. It is a social objectification of the impulse to order which is inherent in all the activities and institutions of human life. . . . Thus, the complex instinct of authority and obedience, which is deeply rooted in the sociality of man, is in itself not an effect produced by evil, but is a gift of the Creator. In the Lutheran tradition one frequently hears it said that the State is an instrument of the Fatherly rule of God' (Ehrenström, p. 152, f.).

Yet although the State is based upon the Divine Creation, the fact is stressed with varying degrees of emphasis that evil has entered into its nature because man has fallen away from his Creator, and hence coercion is a necessary feature of political authority, 'the *ultima ratio* of the sword is a tragic but unavoidable necessity for the preservation of law and order' (p. 158). Nevertheless the sword of compulsion reveals the Fatherly love of God at work:

> 'The fact that God does not abandon humanity to its attempts at self-destruction, but that he makes a certain measure of peace and order possible through the existence of the State, is certainly a token of His long-suffering and His mercy' (p. 158, f.).

There is a certain type of Neo-Lutheran thought in Germany which attempts to follow the modern tendency to interpret the State in terms of *Volksgemeinschaft* (national community), the dynamic realization of the historical destiny of the nation. The fact of nationality is conceived as being based upon the will of the Creator. According to this religious interpretation of the nation (*Volk*) as an Order of Creation, political obligation, even for a Christian, must be determined by the national ethos. From this point it is a short step to Hirsch's view of God as the 'Lord of History,' of Whose will the nations are the instruments and concrete embodiments. Two quotations from Hirsch (as cited by Ehrenström, p. 123, f.) will illustrate this attitude:

> 'Fidelity to the Lord becomes the sanctification of fidelity to the blood and the people (*Volk*) or nation.'
>
> 'The Protestant Christian belongs to one and the same God, both when he hears the Call of God in the Gospel, and when he hears the call of the "Lord of History" in the great and sacred storm of national events. The meeting with God in national existence and in history is the only preparation for meeting with God in the Gospel.'

The crucial difficulty of this type of thought lies in its attempt to identify the national God with the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. What Hirsch seems to be trying to do is to reconcile the Old Testament conception of God with that of the New Testament, to worship Jehovah and God-in-Christ at the same time. Such Lutherans are, in fact, struggling to find a place for the worship of the Christian God in Hitler's Germany. Mr. Ehrenström sums up the situation thus:

> 'Sometimes it (the Lutheran tradition) has even gone so far as to assent explicitly to a dualism between Christian faith and political life, based on the fact that it has not always been able to maintain the

> paradoxical unity between the Creator and the Redeemer. . . . Thus the relation between the Kingdom of Christ and the political sphere was regarded as a tension of static parallelism and not as the tension of dynamic transformation. This led to the tendency to obey without question, and with complete fidelity, the decisions of the State in all public matters, while freedom was claimed for the Church within her own sphere. The recurring difficulty in Lutheran political thought of formulating a homogeneous and distinctively Christian view of the sphere of politics is due to this spirit and outlook' (p. 171).

There are, then, within Christendom to-day several different ways of approach to this question of the nature of the State and its relation to the Church. The reason why there are such very different answers to this one universal and urgent question lies not so much in the fact that Christians living in different lands are naturally predisposed to take different views about the State, but rather in the fact that they take different views about the nature of the Church. That is why it is possible to speak of an Anglican, a Roman, a Calvinist or a Lutheran view about the State; it is not primarily that Englishmen, Italians, Germans, and so on, disagree about political philosophy. Hence we would repeat that the only satisfactory solution of the problem must be an oecumenical one, for only in this way can the limitations of self-satisfied insularity be transcended. We hope that we have shown that Mr. Ehrenström's book is an invaluable introduction to this whole question from an oecumenical point of view, and that the facing of the issue which he puts before us is an urgent duty laid upon Christian people in every land to-day. Let us conclude with a final quotation from the Oxford Report, which is now presented by the leaders of the churches who were assembled at Oxford for the serious consideration of all Christian people:

> 'In the two thousand years of its history the Church has known no escape from the struggle to achieve in the light of its own message a right attitude towards the problems and tasks with which the existence of the State confronts it. At every period the same problem presents itself anew. In our own time, in which perhaps to a greater extent than in any previous generation the traditional solutions and the experiences of the past have been thrown into the melting-pot, it is more than ever necessary that the Church should come to grips with this problem in all its range and complexity and not be content to concern itself merely with matters of secondary importance or with palliatives. There are . . . questions which in this field call for fundamental thought and responsible action in the coming years by Christian men and women throughout the world' (*The Churches Survey Their Task*, p. 250).

THE ENGLISH MEDIÆVAL ALTAR

By J. W. Walker, O.B.E., F.S.A.

THE object of this paper is to present the arrangement and decoration of the altar in the parish churches of this country in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries as shewn in the illuminated Missals and Books of that period.

For this purpose I have, by the kindness of the Assistant Keeper of Manuscripts in the British Museum, made a careful examination of a large number of those volumes in that collection. Other sources of information have been the *Alcuin Club Collections*, *The Transactions of St. Paul's Ecclesiological Society*, Canon Percy Dearmer's *Fifty Pictures of Gothic Altars*, and other works bearing on the subject, such as *Rock's Church of our Fathers*, the edition edited by G. W. Hart and Bishop Frere.

Before the Norman Conquest the altar in England was commonly called 'God's Table' or 'God's Board.' It was sometimes made of wood, a slab on wooden pillars or legs. After the Conquest stone altars became more general and were of the box shape, but the slab was always made of one piece of stone, marble or wood, as symbolical of the unity of the Church, and extended on three of its four sides beyond the body of the altar.

The usual shape of the altar was that of a long oblong, three times as long as broad, and three feet six inches high. Whenever possible the length, so as to give as great a dignity to the altar as possible, was equal to the breadth of the east window under which it stood.

In the greater churches the altar was raised on three steps above the sanctuary, the higher one for the celebrant, the second for the gospeller, and the lowest for the epistoller; but in small churches the rule was only one step: these steps were usually about three feet in breadth and five inches in height.

The fair linen cloth which vested the altar became, as time went on, more and more confined to the top and ends of the altar.

The frontal, or antipendium, in early days hung in loose folds down the front of the altar; towards the middle of the

fourteenth century the pleated frontal took the place of the large folds and loose drapery of previous ages, and in the fifteenth century it gave way to the flat straight hanging frontal as still in use.

The frontlet, not more than six inches in depth, often of costly brocade, or of velvet richly embroidered and generally ending at its lower border in a fringe, was sometimes sewn as a 'parure' on to the front edge of the linen altar cloth; it was always of equal length with the altar.

Towards the end of the fifteenth century, or the beginning of the sixteenth, the custom became common to have a low narrow shelf resting on the inner edge of the altar slab where it touched the east wall. Upon this shelf were placed two candlesticks with a cross or crucifix between them, as well as vases of flowers. Up to the fifteenth century it was common to have either a painting of the Crucifixion, or a carving, on the reredos.

Many parish churches had no reredos, and in many of the pictures shewn in the missals a reredos is conspicuous by its absence.

Usually the sill of the east window came down quite low, so near to the altar slab that only a narrow band of wall was left for a reredos, which, if not of sculptured stone, marble or painted and gilded wood, was of silk or other fabric suspended at the back of the altar from hooks in the east wall, and often composed of similar material to the altar frontal and was changed with it.

Francis Bond says, 'The English high altar had a very glorious reredos, the stained glass of the great east window, on which was often depicted in vivid hues the Crucifixion,' and which was the chief adornment of the altar even when a reredos existed.

Riddels, costers or side curtains were rarely seen in English churches before the fifteenth century.

Peter Quivil, Bishop of Exeter, at a Synod of that diocese held on April 16th, 1287, laid down very clearly the ornaments, etc., to be furnished for the Churches, giving full directions for the plate for the altar, corporals, vestments, towels, rochets, nuptial veil, pall for the dead, frontlet for the altar, missals, legends, antiphons, psalters, ordinals, but there is no mention of riddels or altar curtains.

Of twenty-one illustrations of English altars and their surroundings which are depicted in the Luttrel Psalter, Queen Mary's Psalter of the fourteenth century, several Pontificals of that century, Pope Gregory the Ninth's Decretals of the early fourteenth century and John Lydgate's Legend of Saints Edmund and Fremund, c. 1430, which I have examined, riddels are only shown in one illustration in the latter volume.

Of the thirty-six illustrations of English Altars from the tenth to the sixteenth century, selected by Dr. Wickham Legg and Bishop Frere and published by the Alcuin Club, only four show altars with accompanying riddels, and not one with any example of riddel posts.

The fifty pictures of Gothic altars selected and described by Canon Percy Dearmer only show illustrations of five altars taken from manuscripts or books illuminated in England, and of these five, only one shows the presence of riddels; while ten out of fourteen depicting Flemish altars have riddels; of six Spanish sanctuaries not one is shown to be furnished with them; eight French altars are shown with riddels and fifteen are without them.

Thus out of sixty-two illustrations of altars in England only six are shown surrounded by riddels, and there is not a single specimen of riddel posts either with angels or candles surmounting them, which latter are peculiarly Flemish and really dwarf the altar itself.

From this it is apparent that riddels were practically nonexistent in mediaeval English churches. Mr. J. N. Comper (trans. St. Paul's Ecclesiological Soc., Vol. X) says, 'Most definitely neither riddels nor posts are a necessary adjunct of the English altar, and it is a misnomer to call them English in that sense. The traditional and practical point of greatest importance about the posts is that they should be considered more as a relic of the baldachino than as carriers of lights, indeed they by no means always carried lights as the pictures themselves attest.'

Canon Dearmer told me some years before his death that he had altered his opinion about riddels since the publication of his book, and he then knew that they were uncommon in English parish churches in mediaeval times.

A typical example of an English sanctuary is that in the mortuary roll of John Islip, Abbot of Westminster, 1500—1532, showing the Abbot lying in state before the high altar of the Abbey Church. There the high altar is shown as standing upon three steps overlaid by a carpet, and is vested in a frontal and covered with a fair linen cloth which hangs nearly to the ground at the ends, and has a broad frontlet attached to the fore edge. Behind the altar is a reredos with a representation of the Crucifixion, but no riddels are shown, nor are they shown in illustrations of the Chantry Chapel of Abbot Islip, or in the Chapel of St. John the Evangelist, both on the same roll.

There can be no doubt that the old English altar stood against the east wall of the sanctuary with a sense of openness and dignity, not dwarfed by erections either behind or on its sides, and it seems incorrect in these days to draw attention to the surroundings of the altar rather than to the altar itself.

So early as the fourteenth century it had become customary to leave the altar bare on the last three days of Holy Week, when it was inappropriate to have it hung with a rich frontal, then on Easter Day the altar was clothed in the richest vestments the Church possessed and the whole of the church plate was exposed upon it.

BOOK REVIEWS

AN AFRICAN NOVEL ON MISSIONS*

Prince Nyabongo has written a volume which is a happy combination of fiction and fact. As fiction, it tells the amusing story of the life of a young African of noble birth, giving details of his education and of his difficulties in bringing about any radical changes among his people. As fact, it is a document of importance, for Prince Nyabongo presents intimate details of the life and ceremonies of the Bugandan country. As entertainment, it is highly amusing and sometimes dramatic; and yet throughout the book there is a fervent and serious plea that the white and black races should meet on common ground (in Africa at least), so that there may be a commingling of cultures which will bring about a greater African civilization. And this last is unusual, because few 'savages' ever have the initiative to believe in their own salvation. Most of them are content to accept what the

* *The Story of an African Chief.* By Prince Akiki K. Nyabongo. Introduction by William Lyon Phelps. Illustrated by Eleanor Maroney. 312 pp. (Charles Scribner & Sons. 1935. $3.00.)

white man has to give; and they accept it rather uncritically and without great understanding. But the Prince sees beyond any such receiving of charity to a greater enterprise. Although sometimes only implied, it is obvious that the author desires something beyond what the average missionary can offer. He would want an African university, where European and African culture could be blended through mutual understanding.

At first sight, however, it is the story which stands out. It begins fifteen years before the birth of *Abala Stanley Mujungu,* when Stanley enters the Bugandan country in search of Livingstone. It is the King's first acquaintance with white men, and he receives Stanley with much ceremony, most of which will prove amusing and enlightening to English readers. From Stanley he learns of the 'great book,' which Stanley reads to him. He asks that Stanley send him a man who can read from the book. Stanley also presents to the King a gun; and the King, who has never before seen one, instructs one of the court attendants to try it out on a slave. It works, and the gun is accepted.

When the missionaries arrive, trouble begins immediately. The three missionaries are 'Protestant' (Church of England), 'Catholic' (French), and Mohammedan. Before many moons have passed, friction between them becomes unbearable; the natives choose sides, and there is war among the banana trees. The Protestants finally defeat the Catholics, but in the meantime the King decides his own religion offers fewer difficulties.

Chief Ati, one of the most important subjects of the King, has less than four hundred wives. He has, however, only three children, and the birth of his fourth causes great celebrations. Ati has been away to the wars, and in his contacts with the missionaries he has forgotten his tribal customs. He makes many errors of etiquette, much to the indignation of his wives. When his son is born, he breaks precedent by demanding the right to name him, and he names him after the great explorer, Stanley. It is a commonplace that children shall be born only of the healthiest wives, and there are many ways of preventing both conception and birth. One of Ati's younger wives becomes pregnant without permission, and the doctor is called in to do his duty. Ati desires that his son should be baptized in Stanley's religion, but the Reverend Jeremiah Randolph Hubert (a name derived from two Americans who helped with the manuscript of the book, Dr. Hubert Alexander and the reviewer) refuses because of the polygamous marriage. It becomes obvious, however, that polygamy is part and parcel of the economic and social structure, and cannot be eliminated. (The reader sees this, but not the Rev. Mr. Hubert.) It is by his large number of wives that a rich man counts his wealth; that he manages his estate; that he dispenses charity and thus shares his riches.

Mujungu is sent to the mission school, conducted by the Rev. Mr. Hubert. Mujungu finds the missionary's exposition of *fundamentalism* difficult to understand; and his questions force the missionary to disciplinarian tactics. He dismisses Mujungu from the class for suggesting that the

birth of Jesus as related in the Gospels is a 'fairy story.' The logic and shrewdness of Mujungu's mind may be overdrawn, but Prince Nyabongo is obviously poking fun at reactionary missionaries. 'Was Joseph really the father of Jesus,' asks Mujungu, 'or did some servant act for the Holy Spirit?' And to bring in the question of polygamy, Mujungu accuses Mary of bigamy—both God and Joseph being her husbands. (Readers of Dr. Major's *The Church's Creeds and the Modern Man* will enjoy this section.)

At the conclusion of the book, there is a dramatic picture of a smallpox epidemic, where drums are used to call the doctors from their hospitals. And it is Mujungu, after his father has died and he becomes chief, who submits to the first vaccination. It is to be noticed that the Rev. Mr. Hubert does not visit the village until after the epidemic is over. And in the end, Mujungu is forced by tradition to marry several wives, for as long as he has only one, he is looked upon as a poor man and an unworthy chief.

The book abounds in local colour, to the extent sometimes that one feels the fiction is only a thread upon which to hang tribal customs. But the narrative holds up throughout, and it is the humour and the drama of the various situations which make the book entertaining. Mujungu gets credit for killing a lion (his servants do the actual killing, but he is given the credit), and he is honoured by the King. He tells several native myths, which, for pure appeal, rival Aesop.

The book is written entirely from the Bugandan point of view by a man who has had the advantage of a college and post-graduate education. He spent two years at Yale, and some time at Oxford. He is a small, jet-black man, with a long face which suggests Egyptian blood somewhere in his background. That he had help from Professor Phelps and some of his fellow students at Yale is fairly obvious; yet the book is peculiarly his. It is the spirit of Africa which is expressed so lucidly and entertainingly. For adventure, it stands on its own feet. But, underneath it all, the book is a valid warning to educators and missionaries that Bugandan culture is worth preserving, with the *aid* of the white man but *not* his *dominance*. The book was recommended by the American Book-of-the-Month Club.

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THE APOLOGIA OF PRINCIPAL CAIRNS*

In this volume Dr. Cairns, late Principal of Christ's College, Aberdeen, writes primarily, as he tells us, not for scholars and theologians but for that large body of educated men and women sometimes called the *intelligentsia*. Throughout, however, it is alive to the pressing problems of religious thought dealt with in technical treatises, and can be recommended to all seriously-minded people as a strong, sincere and frank discussion of the perennial problems of religious thought.

* *The Riddle of the World.* By D. S. Cairns, D.D. (Student Christian Movement Press. 1937. 8/6 net.)

In form the book consists of lectures which, as we gather from the preface, were delivered partly under the Baird Trust in Scotland and partly under the Deems Trust in the United States. This gives to what is written a valuable directness of approach: and the reader will often feel that he is in the lecture room listening to the author as he reasons and persuades. As counterbalancing this gain, however, there is a good deal of repetition in the argument: as if the lecturer were intent on recapitulating to successive audiences positions previously maintained, or as if he were seeking to establish the consistency of his thought against some argumentative members of his audience, or elements of his own mind.

In substance, the book is a reasoned declaration of Dr. Cairns' own faith that Christian Theism is the only adequate answer to 'the riddle of the world.' The title of the volume is significant both for what he wishes to say and of how he will say it. The world is a riddle: its obscure or enigmatic character calls for clarification or elucidation. Anyone conscious of this fact —and what thinking person is not?—will be very sensitive to modern scepticisms, hesitations, uncertainties: for he will have met them in his own mind, and his answer will be a reasoned answer.

The book divides itself roughly into two parts. In the first part the author is concerned to combat 'Humanism'—that is, the modern widespread interpretation of existence, associated with such men as Julian Huxley, Bertrand Russell, Lippmann and Dewey, which is based on the assumption that 'science' is the sole pathway to Reality and that all our 'values' have their ground in man himself. Dr. Cairns makes good use of a figure of speech employed by the late Professor J. Arthur Thomson—that science fishes in the sea of reality with the net called 'scientific method,' and that there must be much in the unfathomed sea which the meshes of the scientific net cannot catch. The scientific method is, for example, an *abstractive* method; and so *individuality* escapes the scientific net. Science is concerned, not with individual things, but with concepts and 'laws.' In this respect the scientific method is but an extension of the method of rational man in his invention of the concept. Dr. Cairns further maintains that the aim of science 'to discover law and uniformity in all natural processes and so to win complete accuracy of description and prediction' involves that Nature is 'a closed system'; and that thus there is a denial both of the freedom of God and of the freedom of man. A good deal of use is made throughout the book of this phrase 'a closed system,' and I have not felt that Dr. Cairns' reasoning here was either clear or cogent. Perhaps this is because it is not always manifest who is the precise antagonist the author has in mind. In any case, the phrase is not a very happy one. However we define man's 'freedom' it is an inescapable fact that it has limits: and however we regard God's 'freedom' it also must surely be regarded as limited—or, as the theist would prefer to say, 'self-limited.' Dr. Cairns is, it is obvious, very sympathetic towards that interpretation of Quantum physics associated with Eddington and others, which finds 'indeterminism'

throughout Nature, so that the 'laws' become *statistical*. It may be doubted, however, whether the implied view of causation will commend itself to the scientific thought of the future: and, as we know, many of the foremost representatives of science—Planck and Einstein, for example—reject it. It may be further doubted whether it will be helpful to Theism. At least, all theists will agree with Dr. Cairns that science only gives us partial knowledge.

When Dr. Cairns comes to the more positive aspects of his discussion he speaks with much persuasion and cogency. His argument is that the scientific approach can explain neither the manifest beauty of the universe nor the story of man's religion nor his fundamental moral conviction. In discussing these themes, germane to what is usually called 'natural theology,' there is a very frank and, surely, much-needed repudiation of the contention which is at the heart of our modern 'dialectic theology.' The endeavour to confine 'revelation' to the Word of God contained in the Bible is, as we cannot but feel, while psychologically interesting, yet rationally and morally perverse. It has no more hope of being generally accepted than the dogma of the infallibility of the Pope. This 'dialectic theology' contains, as Dr. Cairns recognizes, 'a whole nest of unexamined presuppositions,' and these are challenged, not only by aggressive naturalists, but by enlightened Christians.

In the second part of his book the author comes to grip with specifically Christian issues. The ground-work of all true Theism, and the outline of the way in which we must interpret the riddle of the world, is found in the Old Testament with its six seminal ideas; the linear conception of history, Divine creation, man's freedom and sin, suffering and death as man's judgment and discipline, the vicarious law, and the Messianic age and the hope of immortality. Dr. Cairns then goes on to discuss, in his closing chapter, 'the substance of the faith.' Space forbids an adequate review of the author's views in this crucial chapter. His frequent use, however, of the term 'humanitarian,' and its application to various types of christological thinking with which Dr. Cairns does not agree, is not conducive to that mutual understanding desiderated if progress is to be made in this realm of Christian thought. He is concerned to combat the notion, which he ascribes to the 'humanitarians,' that Jesus Christ is 'only the last and greatest of the prophets.' The 'only' here is suggestive: and probably means that Dr. Cairns has some conception of a mode by which God could speak to man otherwise than through the consciousness of historic personality. To my own mind—if the reviewer may venture to give his own view—the real question at this point is not the precise dogmatic affirmation we make about Jesus Christ: it is *the ground* of our affirmation. If discussion of Christology is to be helpful it must not proceed by the method of hurling about question-begging terms such as 'humanitarian.' What surely is desired is discussion of *the grounds* of our belief in the unique self-revelation of God in the Person of Jesus Christ, and of the precise nature of this 'uniqueness.'

I should very much like to be present at a completely frank and judicial discussion of the issue between representatives of the 'Modernist or Liberal theology' whom Dr. Cairns repudiates, and representatives of the 'Catholic and Evangelical theology' whom he supports. I have never been able to surrender the faith that Christian men of reason can be brought to common affirmations by patient, sincere and candid discussion.

Other matters besides Christology would have to be considered by such a conference: among them the statement of Dr. Cairns that 'Liberal theology' minimises the Holy Spirit. Many Christians would maintain that this is precisely what 'Liberal theology' does not do: and, indeed, is what traditionalist theology has always done. Which reveals again the need for candid discussion.

It will thus be seen that Dr. Cairns has written a thought-provoking book, directed to a variety of antagonists. Nor must we forget to mention the numerous illustrations which serve to lighten, and enlighten, the argument.

C. J. WRIGHT.

AN ANGLO-CATHOLIC *VIA MEDIA**

This is a slender volume of less than two hundred pages, but it is a book whose importance is not necessarily to be gauged by its size. It has received a wide approval, and the Bishop of Bristol has commended it to the clergy of his diocese. In a preface the Bishop of Winchester tells us that the book was written as a result of a suggestion he made to the author when beneficed in his diocese that he should

> 'write a book stating, in a simple and straightforward way, the reasons for a loyal Anglo-Catholic accepting genuinely and wholeheartedly the position of the Church of England.'

The author describes his book as 'A Vindication of the Faith and Order of the Church of England.'

It was in 1929 that Dr. H. L. Goudge declared that

> 'If Anglo-Catholics are to make any appeal to the mind of England to-day they must get rid of this false doctrine of the infallibility of the Church.'

Of recent years there has been an increasing tendency on the part of Anglo-Catholics to discard any notion of oracular infallibility. Archdeacon Clarke's work is in the line of this development, as is seen by the fact that he acknowledges his indebtedness to Dr. N. P. Williams's essay, 'The Theology of the Oxford Movement,' in *Northern Catholicism*, and also to *One God and Father of All*, by E. Milner-White and Wilfred Knox (the reply to Vernon Johnson's 'apologia,' *One Lord, One Faith*). The Archdeacon examines the antecedent probability of there being any infallible

* *The Via Media*. By C. P. S. Clarke (Archdeacon of Chichester). With a Preface by the Bishop of Winchester. (Longman. 5/-.)

authority in the Christian religion, and decides that it is unlikely that there is any such authority:

> 'It is certain that our Lord left no clear-cut theology of God or of His own Person. His followers had to work out one for themselves. . . . All along they were left to make inferences, whereas if infallibility is to be our guide, one should expect plain statements. The Penny Catechism [of the Roman Catholic Church] is the natural outcome of an infallible authority. Anything less like the Penny Catechism than our Lord's teaching in the New Testament it is difficult to conceive.'

The quarrel liberal religious thinkers have had in the past with many Anglo-Catholics is that they have so often been dualist in their philosophy, maintaining that the method of approach to one aspect of Reality must *a priori* be ruled out in examining another. Accordingly it is good to find Archdeacon Clarke asserting that 'the dogma of infallibility dehumanizes religion, making our knowledge of it depend on means which have nothing analogous in our acquisition of knowledge of other things.' The natural and the spiritual worlds together constitute a unity governed by the same laws.

The Archdeacon shows clearly that the papal infallibility is disproved by history. Not only so, but one of the weightiest arguments against the dogma is that 'for practical purposes it is as though the doctrine had never been defined, because no one knows whether any particular utterance is infallible or not.' We believe it was W. G. Ward who, shortly before the Vatican Council of 1870, declared that he would like to have a copy of a new papal bull every morning with his *Times*! Such a remark was typical of Ward, who delighted to express his hopes and convictions in the most blatant form. There can be no doubt, however, that ultra-montanes like Ward and Manning did expect a great deal more from the promulgation of papal infallibility than has been realized in practice. Actually the decree has become something of a dead letter, and historically is to be seen as the retaliatory blow of the Pope when about to be deprived of his temporal power. It has not proved to be the great weapon against the hosts of liberalism it was hoped it would be, and perhaps its only effect has been to enhance the prestige of the Pope within his own communion.

The Tractarians, with their static outlook on history, accepted the infallibility of the primitive church. 'The only way of finding out the meaning of Scripture,' wrote Newman in his *Prophetical Office of the Church*, 'is to see how the early Church understood it.' Such a point of view is really impossible to-day, and indeed if we are to be bound by the authority of the remote past we may well envy the Roman Catholic his belief in a living authoritative voice, however illusory. Rather than infallibility, Archdeacon Clarke is disposed to claim indefectibility for the Church Catholic. Such a claim implies a belief that although the Church may err from time to time, yet ultimately she cannot fail. The Archdeacon is careful to show that this doctrine of the indefectibility of the Church is not necessarily the refuge of the ecclesiastical opportunist who, finding the dogma of the Church's in-

fallibility swept away by the tide of historical criticism, seeks to build this new dogma on favourite isolated texts like 'He shall guide you into all truth.'

> 'If we hold the doctrine of the indefectibility of the Church we must base it on a general conception of the Church as the creation, or at least the re-creation, of our Lord, and inspired by the Spirit, so that we feel it would be a failure of faith, a surrender to "defeatism," to think that the Church could make shipwreck concerning the faith.'

Although we cannot pretend to be greatly in love with the term 'indefectibility' (first used, we believe, of the Church by Dr. Selwyn) — it is a hideously ugly word — yet such a conception of the Christian Church as seems to be implied by it we have no wish to challenge.

The Archdeacon of Chichester believes that the authority of the Church is expressed through Tradition which so far from being complementary to Scripture includes it.

> 'By Tradition we mean that deposit of faith, morals, and ceremonial, of things to be believed and practised as part of the custom or tradition of the Church.'

When Tradition is applied to any question, that particular question is brought under the judgment of the sum total of the views and opinions of the living Church. Mr. Clarke proceeds to apply his conception of Tradition to the Faith, Sacraments, Worship and Ministry of the Church of England. It is during the course of this discussion that the Archdeacon says many provocative things, as well as many which most Church-people will heartily endorse. Of the practice of mumbling the Eucharist in an inaudible voice, he says that it is

> 'spreading in the Church of England, and like the sand in the Sahara and in parts of Australia is threatening to turn once fertile land into a desert.'

It is astounding that it should be possible to speak of this custom as 'spreading in the Church of England' at a time when in the modern Roman Church there is a revival of congregational worship taking place. Are we to see introduced into our own Church customs which the best Roman Catholic opinion is eager to see disappear? It was Pope Pius X (not Bishop Gore) who urged people to 'pray the mass not to pray at the mass.' Mr. Clarke has also some very sensible remarks to make on the relative merits of the Choral Eucharist and Matins — a question which perplexes many parish clergy. It is refreshing to find an Anglo-Catholic maintaining

> 'that those who prefer Matins have a right to exist. Many of them have already made their Communion at an earlier celebration, and even devout Roman Catholics do not make a practice of assisting at two Masses in one day.'

The Archdeacon is similarly temperate in his attitude towards Episcopacy:

> 'The Churches of the Anglican Communion, at least, have never insisted on belief in the theory but only on acceptance of the fact of the historic episcopate as the authorized channel for ordination.'

The provocative statements that the author makes have chiefly to do with Modernists, to whom it would appear he would deny any home at all in his 'Via Media.' We had thought that the battle for a liberal interpretation of the Creeds was long since won. Mr. Clarke, however, assures us that to belief in the miraculous birth and bodily Resurrection of our Lord 'all the Churches of the "Via Media" are committed.' In support of this assertion he quotes a statement passed by the Upper House of the Convocation of Canterbury in 1905:

> 'That this House is resolved to maintain unimpaired the Catholic Faith, in the Apostles' and Nicene Creeds and in the Quicunque Vult, and regards the faith there presented, both in statements of doctrine and in statements of fact, as the necessary basis on which the teaching of the Church reposes.'

We would draw Mr. Clarke's attention to a resolution passed by the same body in May, 1922:

> 'This House declares its conviction that adhesion to the teaching of the Catholic Church as set forth in the Nicene Creed — and in particular concerning the eternal pre-existence of the Son of God, his true Godhead, and His Incarnation—is essential to the life of the Church, and calls attention to the fact that the Church commissions as its Ministers those only who have solemnly expressed their adhesion.
>
> 'Further, this House recognizes the gain which arises from enquiry, at once fearless and reverent, into the meaning and expression of the Faith, and welcomes every aid which the thoughtful student finds in the results of sound historical and literary criticism, and of modern scientific investigation of the problems of human psychology; and it deprecates the mere blunt denunciation of contributions made by earnest men in their endeavour to bring new light upon these difficult and anxious problems. At the same time it sees a grave and obvious danger in the publication of debateable suggestions as if they were ascertained truths, and emphasizes the need of caution in this whole matter, especially on the part of responsible teachers in the Church.'

All Modernists would endorse the above resolution. Archbishop Davidson wrote in his diary:

> 'The Convocation debates in the first week of May were of the highest importance on the subject of Modernism. In that matter I took, behind the scenes, a leading part. The resolution passed by Convocation was in itself largely my own work, for the really important part of it was the recogntion of the need of free inquiry, and this was wholly due to me' (*Life*, II, p. 1142).

In fact Modernists, with Dr. A. E. Taylor,

> 'dispute the right of any man, or body of men, to claim once and for all to limit the right to recognize the presence of the symbolic element to the cases of certain specified articles and to exclude from active participation in the devotional life of the Christian Community those who do not make the same precise restriction' (*Faith of a Moralist*, II, p. 142).

Within its limitations Archdeacon Clarke's book will serve a useful purpose, particularly in supporting the Anglican brief against Rome. We regret that the book, small though it is, has no index. There are several slips which should be corrected in a future edition. The title of Mr. Peck's book mentioned on p. 84 is *The Values of the Sacrament,* and on p. 80, line 23, the word 'then' should read 'there.' We consider that the author on p. 92 makes an unjustifiable use of a quotation from Mr. E. R. Micklem's *Christian Worship.*

W. J. CRATCHLEY.

FRANK AND FREE*

Mr. Powys's writing is full of wit and wickedness. The title of his latest book is typical of his genius for a startling turn of phrase, though it does less than justice to the great men who are the subjects of these essays, none of whom were rats, and none of whom inhabited a sacristy.

To thirteen historical characters, Mr. Powys adds one that is mythical—Dionysos, who is his chosen deity, standing for a way of life which he holds to be wisest because consistent with the solid facts of human nature and experience. This earth philosophy warns us to give up dreams and to 'walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes.' Whenever we separate ourselves from Nature, says Mr. Powys, we do so at our peril.

It need not too hastily be supposed that Mr. Powys stands for an abandonment of humanity and a return to the animal. He is an unrepentant rationalist, and if he values the senses, he does so chiefly as artist and poet. His attitude is definitely humanist and civilized. It is priestcraft and the dark forces of unreason that he hates—and Mr. Powys is a good hater, like Voltaire.

There is an essay here on Akhenaton, the enlightened Egyptian monarch of the fourteenth century B.C. who challenged the power of the priests and attempted to establish a religion free from all superstition. The priests saw to it that this religion did not survive its founder. There are essays on Confucius, on Aristippus, on *Ecclesiastes.* Mr. Powys recommends the young to study this 'Canticle of Scepticism.' An essay on Lucretius is worthy of so great a subject. 'Though his method is scientific, it is the imaginative rapture of Lucretius, his religious awe before the creative energy of Nature, that gives the work its prophetic power.' A fuller knowledge of the fourth century mentality enables Mr. Powys to give a juster estimate of Julian the Apostate than was possible for Gibbon. Yet, seen against his depressing environment, Julian stands out as a great man, more securely, perhaps, than ever before. He may have been, as Mr. Powys rightly says, 'a spoilt priest,' 'grossly superstitious,' and 'at home in the dim caves of Mithras,' but compared with his contemporaries he was a clear-sighted, humane, honest and rational man. Compare his record with that

* *Rats in the Sacristy.* By Llewelyn Powys. (Watts. 10/6.)

of Constantine the Great, whom ecclesiastical historians of every age have conspired to whitewash !

Mr. Powys writes on Omar Khayyam, but thinks that Fitzgerald's quatrains were precious small beer. ' He celebrates Love, Wine, and Poetry, but ah ! how wanly.' Fitzgerald, it is true, was no Catullus. The Victorians did not allow their passions or their poesy to lead them into impropriety. ' Small wonder his poem appealed to the Pre-Raphaelite group who had accustomed themselves to see life always in reflection like so many Ladies of Shalott.' Mr. Powys, by the by, sees through Swinburne too— a neurotic *poseur.*

There is an appreciative sketch of Machiavelli, but Mr. Powys holds that politics really took second place with him. ' His secret preoccupation, his serious personal preoccupation, was with his own love affairs. There is no doubt that these were the events that really mattered to him.' Yet he quotes a passage from this astute writer which seems to suggest that he did not allow his amours to interfere with his peace of mind. A man's nature is not always faithfully reflected in his writings—which sometimes give a picture of what he desires to be thought rather than of what he is. It is hard always to believe a man who confessed that ' even if at times I speak the truth I hide it among so many lies that it is hard to find.' And yet even here perhaps he was boasting !

All these essays are delightful, but the cream of the collection is the pair at the end—on Robert Burton and Thomas Hobbes. Of the latter we read:

> ' The last years of his life were spent at Chatsworth. The vigour of his body remained unimpaired. He continued to play tennis until he was nearly eighty. In the country, for want of a tennis court, he would walk " uphill and downhill in the parks, till he was in a great sweate, and then give the servant some money to rubbe him." . . . He was suspicious of doctors, shy of medicines, and had his own theories on matters of health (he was wise here, considering the medical practice of the seventeenth century). . . .
>
> ' He calculated that he had been drunk one hundred times, which, as Aubrey comments, was not very often, considering his longevity. . . . It was the custom of this old man to sing himself to sleep. ' He did believe it did his lunges good, and conduced much to prolong life.' . . . He was very bald, and yet within doors would always sit bare-headed and never catch cold, though he was often troubled to keep the " flies from pitching on the baldness." At the age of eighty-six, " to take off my adversaries from showing their folly upon my more serious writings," he translated the Iliad and the Odyssey.'

Thomas Hobbes, though fated to be ' hated and persecuted of the ecclesiastiques,' was a very great man.

Mr. Llewelyn Powys has given us a charming book, and the wood engravings by Gertrude M. Powys are delightful.

J. C. Hardwick.

THE PAPACY IN POLITICS*

It is a long time since a Bishop of Rome could say, with any show of truth, that 'my kingdom is not of this world.' The Papacy is the natural child of autocracy and centralization rather than the lawful heir of the apostolic age. It is essentially a kingdom of this world, with all the worldly wisdom and astuteness, and greed for power that befits the oldest political organization in Europe. Both historically and geographically, its influence and power are ubiquitous, for it had taken root before many of the nations were born. The Papacy is romantic and venerable. It is also sinister and unscrupulous. Hence the legions of its worshippers and its critics.

Mr. McCabe, the author of *The Papacy in Politics To-day*, is neither a worshipper nor a critic. He is an avowed enemy. 'With a wealth of evidence drawn from recent events in Spain, Italy, Germany, Russia, France, Mexico and elsewhere, Mr. McCabe proves,' so we read on the cover,

> 'that every social catastrophe and every political revolution, whether Fascist or Communist or Democratic, has been unscrupulously used and moulded by the Vatican to serve its own ends — the restoration of Papal supremacy and oppression.'

The wealth of evidence at Mr. McCabe's disposal is evidently too much for him. He squanders it recklessly in hysterical overstatement. His fierce gallop through Papal politics from China to Peru, for all its vehemence and pugnacity, proves very little beyond the fact we already know, that Mr. McCabe is very angry with the Papacy and the Roman Catholic Church.

'Who runs at full speed has neither head nor heart.' A wider perspective, a little sanity and serenity, and a nicer balance of judgment would have given some force to his indictment, whereas this book, in our opinion, is a wasted effort. All general principals are submerged in a welter of worrying details. His picture is all shadow, black unrelieved shadow. Even if all his facts are true, and that is questionable, their accumulated effect is a libel. To represent the Catholic Church as one vast horror of 'espionage and intrigue, allied everywhere to murderous violence,' is unscientific and untrue.

A sample of Mr. McCabe's method can be found on pp. 46-47, where, in so short a space, the terms 'savagery,' 'butchery at its foulest,' 'barbarity,' 'equal to Nero in vice and cruelty,' 'brutality' are rained upon the Papacy. Nor is he more temperate in his macabre vignettes of personalities, contemporary and historical; for this encyclopaedic hymn of hate is by no means confined to 'To-day,' 'A boorish and sensual soldier,' 'an uncouth and pious lieutenant of Franco,' 'a scurrilous atheist.' Three of Cardinal Wiseman's *Four Last Popes* are respectively 'a senile converted rake,' 'a paralytic wreck, slobbering senilely,' and 'a greedy sen-

* *The Papacy in Politics To-day*. By Joseph McCabe. (Watts & Co. 1937. 7/6.)
Social Doctrines of the Catholic Church. By Robert G. Brehmer, Jr. (Putnam. 1937. 7/6.)

sualist.' And so, *ad infinitum*. A touch of humour might have spared us all this in a short book. Not that Mr. McCabe lacks a sense of humour of his own. He frequently records his smiles at simple-minded authors, or extravagant Papal claims. Tertullian smiles!

One chapter is devoted to Canon Law, and the author uses all the casuistry he can find to make the worst of it. Roman Canonists are not such rigorists as Mr. McCabe in their interpretation of the Law. Perhaps a 'Probable opinion' could be found to free our author from the obsession that heretics 'must' be burnt. The great codification of the codex, which was accomplished in this century was, in the opinion of many, a genuine attempt to bury the obsolete. When it was promulgated in 1918 the reviewer remembers an old priest declaring with indignation that it was riddled with Modernism.

The book would be incomplete without a reference to the Nazi exposure of monastic vice in Germany, though we fail to see the connection with Papal Policy. It is interesting to note that Mr. McCabe tells us that in one Province alone 276 Franciscan monks (*sic*) were arrested on a charge of sodomy, 'and fifty others confessed their guilt by fleeing across the border.' A report in the *Times* of June 7th of this year says that out of 4,194 regular priests nine have been accused, one sentenced, and eight cases are pending.

Statistics of secessions are invariably futile or sensational, or both. If Mr. McCabe's computations are correct, why does he worry? In a few generations there will not be sufficient orthodox left to burn all the seceders, and as for faggots, will Russia supply them?

This book will do good yeoman service for hecklers in Hyde Park, but for Modernists—*non tali auxilio*.

A very different book on the Catholic Church comes from America, written by Dr. Robert G. Brehmer, jun. It might easily pass as a modern abridged text-book on Catholic sociology written by a Catholic priest, were we not assured, in large print, that the author is a non-Catholic. The sponsorship of the Paulist Fathers is a sufficient voucher for its orthodoxy.

Dr. Brehmer tells us that he has attempted

> 'to set in correct, concise, integrated and easily accessible form the teachings of the Catholic Church in matters social, economic and political.'

He has achieved this object with singular success, and we can go to his book confident that we shall find a reliable statement of Catholic Doctrine on such matters as Marriage, Birth Control, Divorce, Church and State, Socialism and Education. In it Catholics will find all the authoritative formulae for a final and complete scheme of things; the rest of us will find one of the many uninspired attempts at facing modern problems.

The post-Tridentine Catholic Church has been exuberant in mediocrity, but has produced no great thinkers or any theologians of note. Its theology has subsisted on its own scholastic fat, and whatever pabulum modern

learning has to offer has been met by an organized hunger-strike. As a consequence it approaches distinctly modern problems with a mediaeval technique, and solves them, to its own satisfaction, with the dehumanized logic and the abstract a-priorism of the classroom.

We may instance its attitude towards the question of Divorce. Nothing could be more uncompromisingly logical. The indissolubility of marriage is absolute. Prove, however, that your marriage was never valid in the eyes of the Church and you are free not only from the contract, but free to introduce as many non-social elements into the system, as we find in less logical systems. Read these words of Dr. Brehmer if you would recapture the flavour of the classroom:

> 'Venereal pleasure is attached to the sex act to induce men and women to the altruistic procreation of offspring . . . the pleasure cannot be sought or procured except in relation to offspring. Robbed of this it becomes but a form of masturbation . . . This sin committed in wedlock is greater than if committed outside wedlock.'

Fortunately many Roman Catholic confessors are wiser and more human than the system, even granted that the system sanctions Probablism. As their memory of moral Theology has grown dim their experience of men has taught them to doubt with Troeltsch if there be an absolute Christian ethic, or rather 'a continual remastering of the changing materials of the world's life.' Life is not so simple as the text-books would have us believe. Again, Dr. Brehmer's facile statement in discussing war, 'If one state is defending its rights the other is necessarily violating rights,' is made with little obvious regard for the complexity of mixed motives there is in human affairs.

So far we have criticised Dr. Brehmer's subject rather than his treatment of it. He falls into the greatest of all heresies when he identifies Christianity with the Roman Catholic Church (I use the title, as Dr. Brehmer seems to use it, in the technical sense). His historical perspective is as awry as Mr. McCabe's when he tells us that Europe owes the abolition of slavery, the honour of womanhood, and the learning of the ages to the Church. He is as naive as a seminarist when he insinuates that the only men to interpret the Natural Law are those who wear cassocks.

JOSEPH MCDONALD.

ANGELIC VISIONS AND VOICES*

The subject of the being and ministrations of angels is one on which many minds are deeply perplexed. There is no apparent reason why beings of another order should not exist, but, in the opinion of many, there is very little positive evidence that they do. Information concerning them is abundant in ancient Jewish literature, but the genesis of the underlying beliefs is fairly easily discernible, and we need to be assured that they were ever founded on anything more than an active and uncritical imagination.

* *The Angel Teaching of the New Testament.* By Edward Langton, B.D., F.R.Hist.S., M.R.A.S. (James Clarke. 1937. 5/-.)

Judaism thought of God as wholly transcendent, and some compensating doctrine of mediators was therefore required; but the stories in which angels figure in ancient literature are not as a rule such as to inspire confidence, and few to-day would take seriously the elaborate angelology of later Jewish writings.

A belief in angels was taken over from Judaism by the Christian Church, but it has never figured prominently in Christian theology, and it cannot be said to belong to the essence of the faith. Nevertheless it was unquestioned until quite recent times, and if it were abandoned a good deal of the picturesque element would be lost. There are many simple Christians whose faith is in an exclusively transcendent God, and who can therefore find a place for the ministrations of angels. Most serious would be the effect upon our views of the New Testament, for a belief in the activity of angels is deeply ingrained in the authoritative documents of our faith. More than ever it would be necessary to admit that the New Testament writers were men of their own age, and the task of interpreting their thought in terms of modern conceptions would become proportionately more difficult.

How numerous are the references to angels in the New Testament will be realized by anyone who reads Mr. Langton's book. His method is to work steadily through the Gospels, Acts, Epistles, and Apocalypse, quoting and studying each passage, and seeking to determine the underlying beliefs and conceptions. The method is not calculated to make for easy reading, but the work is thoroughly and conscientiously done, reference is made to a great mass of relevant literature, and the study of it will be a wholesome discipline to anyone who has not realized how large a place the belief in angels filled in the minds of the earliest Christians. The main subject, whether angels belong to the realm of fact or to that of fancy, is not fully discussed in the present volume; Mr. Langton is reverently conservative, and reference is made to an earlier work entitled, *The Doctrine of Spirits, Angels, and Demons from the Middle Ages until the Present Time.*

P. GARDNER-SMITH.

THE APOCALYPSE EXPLAINED *

The Book of the Revelation is one of the most fascinating books in the New Testament. It can also be one of the most misleading. Those who think that it is the function of prophecy to foretell the future, and have the idea that divine inspiration prevents a writer from making mistakes are sure to misunderstand it. These false notions lead them to treat the *Apocalypse* as a summary of world events; they try to trace the course of history in its mysterious pages, while they expect its concluding prophesies to be fulfilled in their own times. The Rev. W. J. Ferrar, in his new book, *The Apocalypse Explained,* guards his readers against these errors. In two short introductory chapters he describes apocalyptic literature in general, and the circum-

* *The Apocalypse Explained.* By W. J. Ferrar, M.A. (S.P.C.K. 1937. 3/6.)

stances in which the *Apocalypse* of John the Seer was written. It was a book for his own times, 'The Revelation which God gave him to show . . . the things which must *shortly* come to pass.' In his two concluding chapters Mr. Ferrar discusses the problems of date and authorship and describes the permanent value of the *Apocalypse*. He has nothing new to tell us, but these chapters are clear, sensible and good.

The middle of his book is a commentary on the text, with the Revised Version printed in full. This is an advantage for those who like to study with only one book open in front of them; but the inclusion of the text takes up a lot of room. This makes the commentary very brief. It is not very helpful. Mr. Ferrar comments on passages only; he has no room for notes on difficult individual verses. For instance, to his interpretation of the very difficult Chapter XII., the vision of the woman who gives birth to a child and is persecuted by the dragon, he gives less space than is given either in the *New Commentary* or in Peake's *Commentary*, where the discussion is fullest and much the most satisfactory. This is quite a good little book, but it seems rather extravagant to pay 3/6 for a popular introduction to the *Apocalypse* only, when commentaries on the whole Bible, such as the *New Commentary* and Peake's, cost respectively 16/- and 12/6.

J. K. NETTLEFOLD.

CORRESPONDENCE

To the Editor of *The Modern Churchman*

THE VIRGIN BIRTH CLAUSE IN THE CREED.

SIR,

Mr. Griffiths' article on 'Churchmen and Creeds' in your November issue, pleading for a free and unfettered interpretation of the Creeds in the light of our present knowledge of Holy Scripture, leads one to ponder how far such interpretations are to-day permitted by the 'powers that be' in the Church of England. My own conclusion is that in every instance except one a liberal interpretation of the clauses in our Creeds is not only tolerated but even encouraged by the majority of our Bishops to-day. Any of us, for instance, who taught that heaven and hell were fixed places, that our hope of eternal life is bound up with a resuscitation of dead bodies, or that the Second Advent will be a visible and catastrophic return of Our Lord to earth, would be regarded as old-fashioned and obscurantist in our teaching. The one exception is the Virgin Birth, and there appears to be a diplomatic reason why anything but a literal meaning of this clause cannot be accepted openly by our ecclesiastical statesmen. If any doubts of the virginity of Mary were to be expressed officially by our Church all possible hopes of reunion with Rome would be destroyed for ever. The whole devotional system of Roman Catholics is so bound up with this belief, hedged round as it is by the doctrines of the Immaculate Conception and Perpetual Virginity of Our Lady, that a repudiation of its foundation stone would cause the whole structure to sway dangerously. So Rome is committed up to the hilt to a literal belief in the Virgin Birth, and therefore no one who hopes for reunion with Papal Rome can do anything but oppose any teaching or teacher who shows a lack of 'soundness' in this vital matter.

At the same time our most eminent Anglican apologists for the truth of the Virgin Birth, such as Armitage Robinson, Gore and Bishop Headlam, make certain weighty admissions with regard to the importance of the doctrine. Not only is the historical evidence for the story comparatively slight, but it is necessary to distinguish a particular *mode* of the Incarnation of our Lord from the *fact* of the Incarnation itself; in Bishop Headlam's words 'it is never given as a proof' (*Jesus Christ in History and in Faith*, p. 170); the most that can be said for the belief is that it is not incongruous with the general picture of our Lord's nature as it is revealed in the New Testament.

Yet in spite of these admissions many people, as Mr. Griffiths points out, 'still regard belief in a miraculous and extraordinary birth as the equivalent of assent to the doctrine of the Incarnation,' and in this confusion of thought lies danger to the faith of many, a danger that can only be removed if we clergy and teachers have the courage to point out its fallacy.

The following simple biological analogy, which I have found useful in the pulpit and in Bible Classes, shows the fallacy of attempting to use the story of the Virgin Birth as a proof of the doctrine of the Incarnation: the child of an African mother by an English father, for instance, would not be by that fact both a perfect African and a perfect Englishman; on the contrary, he would be a hybrid, not true to either type. So far, therefore, from being a proof of our Lord's Divinity and Humanity, the story of the Virgin Birth, if taken literally, would appear, on scientific grounds at any rate, to make belief in the Incarnation more difficult.

And yet St. Matthew and St. Luke, our only sources for the story, both suggest that Jesus was the Son of God because of an express action of the Holy Ghost. St. Matthew i, 18, says 'She was found with child by the Holy Ghost'; and in St. Luke i, 35, in response to Mary's question 'And shall this be, seeing I know not a man?' the angel replies: 'The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee; *therefore* also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.'

From these passages it seems difficult to avoid the conclusion that while our leading theologians warn us against regarding the Virgin Birth as a proof, yet the evangelists who record the story both regarded it as a proof that Jesus Christ was the Son of God, and told it with that express object.

In view of these facts I reach two conclusions: (i) Our Church authorities, sacrificing the ideal of reunion by uniformity, should give to a liberal interpretation of the clause 'born of the Virgin Mary' the same official sanction and encouragement as they give in the case of other credal clauses. (ii) The question of the public recital of our creeds *in their present form* must soon be faced and tackled courageously if they are not to bewilder rather than to strengthen the faith of many who recite them.

St. Botolph's Rectory, Cambridge. A. E. N. Hitchcock.

WHAT IS RELIGIOUS BELIEF?

Sir,

Mr. Floyd hardly seems to have grasped my argument. That religious belief is compounded of two separate elements: (1) the adoption of a view as to the nature of reality for a basis of action, and (2) a judgment that that view is proved to be true. That it is intellectually dishonest to promise never to alter that judgment, while not so in regard to the former element, which is the essential one.

It has been said 'The devils believe (*i.e.* judge correctly as to the nature of reality) and tremble,' but that does not make them religious.

I most certainly include 'insights and intuitions' as some of the *evidences* of the nature of reality and the total evidence may be sufficient to make one adopt a certain basis of action (merited as well as physical), while insufficient definitely to prove its truth to a critical mind. Also the modern standard of what constitutes proof has risen, so that many more people do criticise evidence in a way almost unknown in the past.

No doubt being convinced that one's view of reality is proved to be true is a happy state of mind, but those are not to be rejected who are willing to adventure their lives on a basis which appeals to their highest instincts, although they realise that it may prove to be an illusion.

J. H. HUME-ROTHERY.

Mendip House, Headington Hill, Oxford.

[We regret that in the following sentence, 'We do not know if God exists, but live as if he does,' the second 'if' was omitted from Mr. Floyd's letter published in the December issue, p. 528.—ED., *M.C.*]

THE MODERN CHURCHMEN'S UNION COUNCIL ELECTION, 1938.

SIR,

I shall be glad if you will kindly give publicity to the following official notice to members of the Modern Churchmen's Union.

By the Constitution the following elected members of the Council retire on the day of the Annual General Meeting in May, 1938, and are not eligible for re-election, *viz.*:—Miss A. M. Ashley, Rev. Canon J. S. Bezzant, Rev. L. B. Cross, Rev. R. R. Lewis, Mr. Claud Mullins, Mr. W. F. Stiff, and Dr. Douglas White.

The following co-opted members of the Council retire at the same time, but are eligible for election, *viz.*:—Rev. P. Gardner-Smith, Rev. R. Mackay, Rev. Canon W. H. Mackean, Rev. Canon H. G. Mulliner, Rev. A. F. Robson, Rev. Canon T. Guy Rogers, Rev. H. J. Trueman, Miss Dorothy Ward.

All other members of the Council whose names are in the list published in this magazine continue to serve.

Ten members are to be elected to the Council this year, and the nominations of candidates must reach the Secretary not later than March 1st. The names must be proposed and seconded by members of the Union, and the consent of the nominees should first be obtained. By the revised Constitution 'any member may nominate one or more (up to four) candidates for election to the Council.'

If more than ten nominations are received, voting papers will be sent to all members of the Union.

T. J. WOOD,
Organizing Secretary.

520 Grand Buildings,
Trafalgar Square,
London, W.C.2.
January 10th, 1938.